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MEMOIR

OF

ADMIRAL LORD KEITH

ADMIRAL LORD KEITH, K. B.

From a painting by W. Owen

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MEMOIR

OF THE HONOURABLE

GEORGE KEITH ELPHINSTONE

K.B.

VISCOUNT KEITH, ADMIRAL OF THE RED

BY

ALEXANDER ALLARDYCE

AUTHOR OF 'THE CITY OF SUNSHINE,' ETC.

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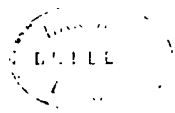

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NOTE.

THE materials for the present Memoir of the public life and services of Viscount Keith have been chiefly taken from his journals, despatches, and official letters, preserved in the charter-room at Tulliallan Castle, Perthshire. The only lives of Lord Keith hitherto published have been contained in brief magazine obituaries, and in Chambers's 'Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen'; but I have had the advantage of a manuscript memoir, prepared for Lord Keith's family by Mr James Napier, the author of 'Biographical Sketches of the Keiths Earls Marischals,' and of an excellent Guide-Book to Stonehaven, which also contains many interesting particulars of the Keith Marischal family. To this manuscript I have to acknowledge frequent obligations; and I am indebted to the kindness of Lord Keith's daughter, Lady William Godolphin Osborne-Elphinstone, in

placing it and other documents at my disposal, and in supplying me with much valuable information regarding her father's life and services.

Among the numerous books which I have had occasion to consult, Mr James's excellent 'Naval History' must be specially mentioned. In the frequent instances where I have ventured to differ from Mr James's facts and conclusions, my authority has been official despatches and journals found among Lord Keith's papers.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE ELPHINSTONE FAMILY,	1
II.	EARLY SERVICES,	8
III.	FIRST COMMAND,	14
IV.	THE AMERICAN WAR,	23
V.	THE CAPTURE OF CHARLESTOWN,	39
VI.	WARWICK AND CARYSFORT,	49
VII.	THE DESCENT UPON TOULON,	59
VIII.	THE CAPE EXPEDITION,	83
IX.	THE CAPTURE OF THE DUTCH FLEET,	104
X.	THE NORE AND PLYMOUTH MUTINIES,	133
XI.	THE PURSUIT OF ADMIRAL BRUIX,	153
XII.	THE BURNING OF THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE,	175
XIII.	THE BLOCKADE OF GENOA,	193
XIV.	THE CONVENTION OF EL ARISH,	222
XV.	THE LANDING AT ABOUKIR,	247
XVI.	THE FRENCH EVACUATION OF EGYPT,	275
XVII.	RETURN FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN,	306
XVIII.	THE THREATENED INVASION,	319
XIX.	THE SURRENDER OF BUONAPARTE,	350
XX.	CONCLUSION,	414
	INDEX,	427

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

ADMIRAL LORD KEITH, K.B.—*From a Painting by Hoppner*, ... *Frontispiece.*

LORD KEITH AT MUIZENBERG.—*From a Painting at Tulliallan Castle*, . . . *To face page* 96

THE LANDING AT ABOUKIR, ... " " 259

MAPS AND PLANS.

NORTH AMERICAN COAST. To illustrate the Naval Events of 1776-1783, . . . " " 26

SIEGE OF TOULON, ... " " 59

GENOA AND ITS ENVIRONS. To illustrate the combined operations, 1800, . . . " " 195

BATTLE OF ALEXANDRIA AND LANDING AT ABOUKIR, ... " " 266

ADMIRAL LORD KEITH.

CHAPTER I.

THE ELPHINSTONE FAMILY.

1746–1761.

On the 7th January 1746, George Keith Elphinstone, whom history knows as Viscount Keith, Admiral of the Red, and Knight of the Bath—and who, in an era of great admirals, was thought worthy to rank among the first of British naval commanders—was born at his father's tower, in the parish of Airth and the county of Stirling.

The date of his birth was a very critical period in the history of the Scottish nobility; for only a few miles off, the remains of Prince Charles's adventurous expedition were making a desperate effort to reduce Stirling Castle, and the country was plunged in all the terror and distress which accompany civil war.

Fortunately for his family, Lord Elphinstone's principles had saved him from being associated with the cause of the Stuarts, although his cousin and cadet, the Lord Balmerino, was one of the chief leaders in the "Forty-five." His near connection and warm friend the Earl Marischal, too, had suffered exile for the previous rebellion; but the Earl's experience had before this convinced him that a Stuart would never again sit upon the throne of Britain, and his counsel to his kinsman would doubtless be to keep out of the struggle. Lady Elphinstone, however, was strongly imbued with the Jacobite sentiments which so many ladies of her day cherished; and a window is still shown in the ruined tower of Elphinstone, from which a persecuted Jacobite, to whom she had given concealment, leaped out and made his escape on the approach of a party of the royal troops, who had received information of his whereabouts.

Though of ancient lineage, and connected with the noblest houses in Scotland, neither the wealth nor the possessions of the Elphinstone family adequately corresponded to the dignity of its position. The Elphinstone estates, which had once been very extensive and widely spread, were only of moderate extent and of modest rental in the middle of the eighteenth century. The barons of Elphinstone had, however, always lived respected and honoured on their property; and the social esteem in which they were held is testified to by the alliances which they formed. In

the time of the tenth Lord Elphinstone, Lord Keith's father, the representation of three great Scottish earldoms was united in his wife—the attainted dignity of Marischal, the extinct earldom of Wigton, and the attainted earldom of Perth. Lady Clementina Fleming, who was married to Charles Lord Elphinstone on 14th October 1735, had been with her mother, the sister of the Earl Marischal, celebrated among the beauties and toasts of Edinburgh society, which was then in the last flush of brilliancy preceding its decay. The stamp of provincialism had not then been set upon the *salons* of the Scottish capital: they were exclusive, refined, and witty, with grand traditions of their own, and with native tastes qualified by the influences of French intercourse. The ladies were the *grandes dames* of whom Scott's Mrs Bethune Baliol is the typical survivor. Among these the Countess of Wigton, Lady Mary Keith by birth, and her daughter, Lady Clementina Fleming, held high place; and Allan Ramsay, as poet-laureate of Edinburgh society, has duly celebrated the beauties and virtues of both. In an eclogue called "Keitha," written on the death, at an early age, of the Countess, Ramsay presents us with her portrait in the following lines:—

"Ah! wha could tell the beauties of her face?
Her mouth that never op'd but wi' a grace,
Her een, which did wi' heav'nly sparkles low,
Her modest cheek flushed wi' a rosie glow,

Her fair brent brow, smooth as the unwrinkled deep
When a' the winds are in their caves asleep,
Her presence like a summer's morning ray
Lightened our hearts and gart ilk place look gay.
Now twined of life these charms look cauld and blae,
And what before gave joy, now makes us wae :
Her goodness shined in ilka pious deed,
A subject, Ringan, for a lofty reed.
A shepherd's sang maun sic high thoughts decline,
Lest rustic notes should darken what's divine.
Youth, Beauty, Graces, a' that's good and fair,
Lament, for lovely Keitha is nae mair."

Ramsay's portrait of the young Lady Clementina is less forcibly drawn, but we know that she inherited the energy and talents of her maternal ancestors the Keiths in a marked degree.

" O Clementina ! sprouting fair remains
Of her wha was the glory of our plains ;
Dear innocence wi' infant darkness blist,
Which hides the happiness that thou hast missed :
May a' thy mither's sweets thy portion be,
And a' thy mither's graces shine in thee."

Lord Elphinstone must have been thought very fortunate in securing the hand of this fair daughter of the Keiths and the Flemings; and Lady Clementina made an excellent wife, and became the mother of a large family. There were seven sons and eight daughters of the marriage; and Lord Elphinstone doubtless found his quiver rather too full for his estate; but the modest circumstances at the Tower taught the boys a lesson of self-reliance and independence that was not always turned to such good account in the baronial houses of the day.

Keith Elphinstone was the fifth son and seventh child of the family, and he was named after his grand-uncle the Earl Marischal, who was then living at the Court of Prussia, and sharing in the favour which Frederick the Great had extended to his illustrious brother, Marshal Keith. He was baptised on 10th February 1746, by the minister of St Ninians in Stirlingshire, a parish not far distant from Elphinstone Tower.

The limited means of the Elphinstone family made it expedient that the sons as they approached manhood should make their choice of professions; and their selections were expressive of the energy and enterprise of their characters.

The young Scotsman of the day, who was restrained by feelings of nobility in the choice of a career, and without much money to push himself on, saw few prospects open to him. The time was past when the Continental services offered to young men of rank a stirring field where they might earn both honours and rewards; and a better sentiment had sprung up that their own country possessed a prior claim upon their abilities which could not be patriotically laid aside. John, the Master of Elphinstone, chose to enter the army; but the younger brothers sought more stirring and adventurous lives upon the sea, a profession rarely adopted at the time by young Scotsmen of birth. The navy had not then become the popular profes-

sion that it was in the latter part of George III.'s reign, when the victories of Jervis, Howe, and Nelson had made it a service equally illustrious with the army. Coarse society, rough usage, and hard fare, such as Smollett has so forcibly described in his 'Roderick Random,' were then the inevitable lot of the naval officer; and without back-stairs influence at the Admiralty, his chances of having his merits recognised were very slender. But with the beginning of George III.'s reign a better era opened for the sea service; the importance of the navy as the mainstay of national defence was recognised; and the Oakums and Whiffles had to give place to men who were marked out for command by bravery and seamanship.

The second and third sons, Charles and William Elphinstone, both entered the Royal Navy. Charles, a young sailor of much promise, was unfortunately serving as a midshipman on board of Admiral Broderick's flag-ship, the Prince George, when, on the 13th April 1758, that vessel took fire off Ushant, and young Elphinstone was one of the 485 who lost their lives in that sad disaster. William Elphinstone, from whom the present Lord Elphinstone is descended, learned his profession in the Royal Navy, but speedily sought employment in the then more adventurous service of the East India Company, where he quickly rose to high command, and ultimately obtained a seat in the Court of Directors.

We have few records of Keith Elphinstone's boyhood and education previous to his joining the navy. Every Scottish family of position had its chaplain in those days, whose services were much more utilised in tuition than in spiritual advice. However Keith came by his education, the vigour of his letters and the proficiency in languages, history, and law, that he displayed in after-life, show that he had received a better training than contemporary midshipmen could generally boast of. He is said, when a mere boy, to have exhibited a strong ambition to distinguish himself in the naval service of the country, which must have been greatly stimulated by the news of the gallant successes of Boscawen, Hood, and Rodney, which would in course of time reach the Scotch shires. The Earl Marischal also gave his young grand-nephews great encouragement to select careers at sea, as more likely than the army to lead to distinction and fortune. Accordingly, Keith Elphinstone had no sooner finished his education than he was received as a midshipman on board the Gosport, commanded by Captain John Jervis, and despatched to Portsmouth to join his ship, probably with little confidence that peerages and the baton of Commander-in-Chief were awaiting him in the profession on which he was going to embark. He had just passed his fifteenth year when he went to sea in 1761.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY SERVICES.

1761–1771.

THE Gosport was but a fifth-rate ship of 44 guns; and Jervis's merits as a seaman had only been lately recognised by his promotion to a post-captaincy. At the time when Keith Elphinstone joined, the Gosport was kept close to the home station, where there was no chance of the officers earning any of those distinctions that were then falling so thickly in the way of other king's vessels in the East and West Indies.

But the opportunity was favourable for learning the practical duties of a sailor; and young Keith Elphinstone, we are assured, profited greatly by the instructions of Captain Jervis, and by the care which was taken in exercising the young officers. It was no small piece of good fortune for young Elphinstone that he had to learn the rudiments of duty under a captain so well qualified to teach it; and after Jervis had become Earl of St Vincent, he never failed to

recall among his recollections of the Gosport that Lord Keith had served under him as a midshipman in that vessel.

On the conclusion of the general peace in 1763 the Gosport was paid off, and Elphinstone transferred to the Juno frigate, with which he does not appear to have been actively employed; and afterwards he was rated in the Lively and Emerald in succession. The naval service was unsettled by the reduction of the fleet, and midshipmen were transferred hither and thither wherever a berth could be found for them. Of Keith Elphinstone's service in these vessels we have found no records that are worth preserving. A short season of inactive routine had set in, promotion grew slow, and enterprise finding no outlet in a time of unwonted peace, greedily sought for vent in voyages of discovery, such as Byron, Wallis, Carteret, and Cooke embarked upon about this time.

Elphinstone was as yet too young in his profession to strike out an independent career for himself; but the peace, which to all appearances was to be a durable one, must have made him uneasy about his prospects. The royal service in a time of tranquillity held out few temptations to a lad of active character who had his way to make in the world; and we soon find him quitting the Emerald to serve under the flag of the East India Company, on board a vessel of which his elder brother, the Honourable

William Elphinstone, was commander. A voyage to the East in those days was a profitable adventure, for those officers who had any little capital to invest in private trade generally succeeded in securing rich speculations. Their uncle the Earl Marischal—whose attainder had been recently reversed as a reward for warning Mr Pitt of the Bourbon Family Compact, which he had discovered while ambassador from Prussia at the Court of Spain—had equipped the two Elphinstones with two thousand pounds apiece to invest in their voyage. We do not know how the money turned out, but if they had the ordinary luck of other adventurers of the time, each of the young men would lay the foundations of a little independence; and Keith Elphinstone after his East India voyages appears to have had means at his command. Otherwise the voyages which he made to China on board his brother's vessel seem to have been uneventful, except that his health suffered severely from the climate. In 1767, however, he made a second voyage to the East, and was promoted by Commodore Sir John Lindsay to a lieutenancy.

Notwithstanding the fact that many young men of family were then serving under the East India Company's flag, the Earl Marischal was very solicitous that his favourite nephew should return to the Royal Navy. Writing from Potsdam, on August 21, 1768, to William and Keith Elphinstone, the Earl says: "I wrote you, my dear nephews, some time since that I intended to

leave in your hands the four thousand pounds I lent you for the last voyage to the Indies. . . . I wish the money may prosper in your hands, for believe me I have great pleasure to think I do you service. To you, little Ben,"—a pet name by which the Earl was wont to distinguish Keith—"I rejoice from my heart to know from Mr Seton that you, whom I left a great overgrown boy, are now as fine a fellow as ever walked quarter-deck, and that I may surely count from your own merit that you will ere long have a ship, and by your own skill and management bring your ship and yourself to a good harbour." The Earl made use of his recently recovered influence in Britain to procure Keith's reinstatement in the Royal Navy, for which Elphinstone himself began to grow anxious as the signs of a renewal of war with France became more frequent. The Earl Marischal writes again on 12th May 1769, telling his nephew the results of an interview he had had with Major Hawke, the Admiral's son: "I told him you had served in the navy, and then in the service of the East India Company, and that I was not sure if you would continue in the service of the Company, where your brother had a ship, or return into the Royal Navy, which is the most honourable, though that of the Company may be the most lucrative. . . . I suppose if this find you at home there will be next morning when you all meet at breakfast a council on what I wrote: that my lady will be of opinion to

continue in the service of the Company as least dangerous; your father will say that in time of peace there is less danger in the navy as well as more honour—that you will be mostly at home; and that in time of war you will be exposed to fight in the service in the Company, and in a ship not fitted for fighting. The young ladies will rather incline to your returning into the navy, since when you are not at sea you will be mostly with them, and they will to that pleasure sacrifice the silks, chintzes, fans, japan-work, chinaware, cockatoos, and monkeys they might otherwise expect if you continue going to India and China. You must decide the question yourself, as having had some trial of both services. Let me know, dear Ben, the debates of the house, and the arguments of the six councillors."[1]

This is one of the few pictures that have come down to us of the Elphinstone family circle, and it is a very pleasant sketch, drawn by an affectionate imagination, which solaced itself in exile by planning for the happiness and welfare of the loved relations in the old Scotch tower. Keith came back from his East Indian voyage in the beginning of 1771, and after a few months spent at home he was again reinstated in the Royal Navy, with allowance for the rank and experience he had won in the service of the Company. His first appointment was to the

[1] Lord and Lady Elphinstone and their daughters, May, Eleanor, Primrose, and Clementina.

second lieutenancy of the Trident, 64 guns, on 21st May 1771. His station was the Mediterranean, where a fleet under Admiral Sir Peter Dennis, Bart., was cruising to keep a watchful eye on the French and Spanish ports; where naval preparations that did not bode well for the continuance of peace were believed by the Admiralty to be in progress.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST COMMAND.

1772–1774.

On 18th September 1772, young Elphinstone, then of the age of twenty-six, received his commission as Commander. He was placed in charge of the Scorpion sloop of 14 guns, and employed on the coast of Minorca and in the Gulf of Genoa. The work was not enticing to a young and ardent officer anxious to distinguish himself; for it apparently consisted in sailing between Port Mahon and Palma, and in cruises along the Spanish coast and about the Gulfs of Marseilles and Genoa, alternated with visits to the fleet for orders and to present reports. The monotonous work and the slender chances of advancement which it presented fretted Elphinstone, who freely poured out his complaints and hopes in his letters to his uncle the Earl Marischal. In a reply from the latter, dated 26th December 1772, young Keith is counselled to have patience, and to wait for his chance. "Dear Ben, I lose no time to wish you

many happy new years, fair winds, and good weather and health to all aboard the Scorpion. There are more lies in London than anywhere I know, because there are more people to lie. We do well here [Berlin] considering the numbers less than in London. Admiral Ems, noble Venetian, passed here as a traveller. It was immediately said that this king [Frederick the Great] had bought twenty sail of the line, many galleys and bomb-ketches, and Ems was made High Admiral. When he takes possession of his employment I shall recommend you to him; in the meantime keep your Scorpion. I send you this under cover to Mr Farquharson, for I write at you, not to you—my letter will not in January reach Minorca."

Though it was peace-time in the Mediterranean, and the work intrusted to the Scorpion was seldom more than mere routine, Elphinstone on several occasions displayed examples of that spirit and determination, and high-minded desire to enforce respect for the British flag, which afterwards came to be recognised as leading features in his character. In the autumn of 1773 he was subjected to a vexatious quarantine by the authorities of Port Mahon; and so strenuously did he back up his complaints, by moving the admiral, the consul, and every authority that could be brought to bear upon the magistrates of the port, that they were unwillingly compelled to make amends to the Scorpion. Two months later, when the Scorpion was lying at Nice, Elphinstone received

information that some British deserters were strolling about the town, and sent a letter to the Sardinian governor demanding that they should be surrendered to him. This the governor declined, pleading that the king's orders expressly prohibited him from acceding to Captain Elphinstone's request. Elphinstone with his usual perseverance wrote to our ambassador at Turin, who was then Sir William Lynch, informing him of the facts, and quoting the clause of the treaty between Great Britain and Savoy of 1669 under which he had put forward his demand; and meanwhile he took up his position off the port until his application was granted. The result was that Elphinstone speedily had his own way. The deserters were surrendered, with a good-natured request from the Sardinian Government that they might not be punished, to which Elphinstone readily acceded. In the month of December of the same year the Scorpion came into the Bay of Naples; and an incident occurred which led to a correspondence between her commander and Sir William Hamilton, the British ambassador, in which the former showed his usual firmness and spirit. Elphinstone on his arrival found that neither the captain of the port nor any other Neapolitan officer of suitable position came out to receive his vessel; and some controversy arose between the officers of the Scorpion and the officials of the *pratique* boat in consequence of the indignity. The latter on their return represented that Elphinstone

had threatened that if any of the galley-slaves took refuge on board his ship, he would not give them up. The port officials, eager to misrepresent the captain of the Scorpion and conceal their own discourtesy, had all the slaves put in irons, and guards set on the galleys, and the king's secretary made a formal complaint to the British ambassador, who called on Elphinstone for an explanation. This Elphinstone had no difficulty in making. He stated the treatment which he had received from the port officials, and concluded with the following declaration of the course which he meant to pursue—words in which it is easy to see the detestation with which the Neapolitan harshness to their slaves, even at that day, inspired high-minded British officers :—

"I must further inform your Excellency, that I shall continue to pursue in this port, as I have in every other, all possible means to prevent any Turkish slave from coming on board; but if, notwithstanding, any shall get on board my ship or boats, I am not at liberty to send them ashore. I do not mean to protect any deserter or offender that may be subject to the King of Naples, provided the same rule is observed with regard to those belonging to H.M.'s ship.

"I need not mention to one of your Excellency's delicate sentiments how much I feel myself hurt by this vague aspersion on my character as an officer and a gentleman; and doubt not but those who have

it in their power will grant all satisfaction due to the justice of my cause."

The incident ended in the transmission through the ambassador of the apologies of the Sicilian Court for the misrepresentations to which Elphinstone had been subjected.

Even in his first command Elphinstone showed himself capable of maintaining a high state of discipline on board, and of being able to judiciously mingle necessary severity with kindness and thoughtful conduct towards his men. The log of the Scorpion, which has been preserved among his papers, shows how guardedly his punishments were proportioned to the degree of demerit and to the character of the offender. And these punishments were singularly few, considering that it was an era when the "cat" was in daily use in the navy; but Elphinstone's high character and unswerving justice infused a deeper sense of discipline into his men than the penal clauses of the articles of war could have inculcated. Of this we have convincing proof in a correspondence between him and one of the officers of the Scorpion who had fallen under his displeasure; and the letters record that Elphinstone first took the steps which his duty required of him, and then forgave, and did his best to aid the culprit in obtaining another appointment.

During his command of the Scorpion, Elphinstone appears to have been naturally impatient at the inactivity of a naval career in times of peace, and

to have grumbled a good deal at the rare chances of promotion. The climate of the Mediterranean, however, did him much service in recruiting his constitution, which had suffered severely in his India and China voyages, and in fitting him for the rough work which was not far distant. His health, however, did not mend so rapidly as he could have wished; and his great-uncle Marischal, writing to him from Potsdam on July 28, 1773, says: "I am always glad to hear from you, dear Keith, but not with what you say of your health, which yet I hope, considering your age, shall mend. . . . I am quite in good health and very near ripe, according to the system of the philosopher Maupertuis, who counts a man ripe, not when he is so for getting bairns, but when his judgment is ripe; not when he is ripe for the gallows; but when he fairly dies, then he is full ripe."

While on the Mediterranean station Keith Elphinstone applied for leave to pay a visit to his family, and had purposed with his brother William to cross over to Germany to see the Earl Marischal, upon whom the weight of years was now beginning to lie heavily. He was by that time upwards of eighty, but, though suffering from deafness and many bodily infirmities, his mind was still as active and his spirit as high as when, sixty years before, he had been one of the guiding spirits of Mar's unfortunate insurrection. Some years before, the Earl Marischal had been visited by his clansman, Colonel, afterwards Sir Robert Murray Keith, who had asked the exile to furnish him with

a statement of his ailments, that he might consult a London physician about them. The Earl returned the following answer: "I thank you for your advice of consulting the English doctor to repair my old carcass. I have lately done so by my old coach, and it is now almost as good as new. Please therefore to tell the doctor that from him I expect a good repair, and shall state the case: first, he must know that the machine is the worse for wear, being eighty years old. The reparation I propose he shall begin with is: one pair of new eyes, one pair of new ears, some improvement on the memory. When this is done, we shall ask new legs and some change in the stomach. For the present this first reparation will be sufficient, and we must not trouble the doctor too much at once."[1] The Earl was held in the highest honour in the Prussian Court, not less for his brother's services than for his own merits, and his talents secured for him the friendship and correspondence of the philosophers and *literati* whom the patronage of Frederick the Great attracted thither. In the autumn and winter of 1774, as he found his strength rapidly ebbing, he began to get more and more anxious to see his favourite nephew.

But Keith was then expecting news of his captaincy by every mail from the Admiralty, and could not venture to press too urgently for furlough. Parliament had already begun to take measures for

[1] Memoirs and Correspondence of Sir Robert Murray Keith, K.B., i. 133, 134. London: 1849.

punishing the rebellious inhabitants of Boston, who in December 1773 had boarded the British tea-ships, and thrown the cargoes into the harbour. The fleet on the American station was being reinforced, and it was only by keeping close to his vessel that Elphinstone could hope to have a chance of being transferred to a more stirring scene of action. The Earl Marischal writes from Potsdam on the 5th October 1775: "I just received yours, dear Ben, from Genova. I am sorry you have wrenched your ankle. I see you have been so much at sea, that you don't know how to walk on land. When you come to a port, walk a little to learn. I shall rejoice to see you; but if you don't come soon, I may chance to play you a trick and not be at home, for I grow very weak. Don't grumble, good Ben—I have done pretty well; eighty years are long. Few go so far. I know no pretence I have to live much longer than other folks."

The good old Earl was not destined to see his nephew again. He lingered on until 28th May 1778, preserving, in spite of his infirmities, the brave, lively, and genial spirit which had carried him safely through the many misfortunes of a very checkered life. "He is," says Sir Robert Murray Keith, who paid him two or three visits, "the most innocent of God's creatures; and his heart is much warmer than his head. The place of his abode is the very temple of dulness. . . . He finds, notwithstanding, a hundred little occupations which fill up

the four-and-twenty hours in a manner to him not unpleasing; and I really am persuaded he has a conscience that would gild the inside of a dungeon."[1] His illustrious brother, Frederick the Great's field-marshal, had fallen twenty years before, in a gallant effort to turn the Austrian victory on the field of Hochkirchen, and with the Earl's death the direct line of the ancient house of Keith—the hereditary Marischals of the Scottish Crown — passed away. In his long and romantic career there is no finer feature than the tender feelings which he continued to show in exile for his distant kinsfolk; his warm interest in all the little family affairs of the Elphinstone circle; and his solicitude to aid the young men in their battle with the world. The reflection which his genial letters cast upon Keith Elphinstone's aims and ambitions, throws almost the only light that now remains upon the earlier part of the latter's personal career.

The Scorpion was ordered home in the summer of 1774, and in the autumn of that year was sent round to the Firth of Forth, whence Elphinstone was able to take a month's leave to spend with his family. But the time was close at hand that was to find him more fitting employment than his cruises of observation in the Mediterranean, or doing coast-guard duty in his native waters.

[1] Memoirs and Correspondence of Sir R. M. Keith, K.B., i. 129.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMERICAN WAR.

1775–1779.

On 11th March 1775, Elphinstone took command of the Romney, then fitting at Deptford for a voyage for Newfoundland; and on the 11th May he was gazetted post-captain, about a week before he sailed. The two intervening months were a period of great activity with the captain-elect. Elphinstone was daily employed in superintending the victualling of his vessel, in endeavouring to open the reluctant ears of the Admiralty to her numerous deficiencies, and in picking his crew, among whom he succeeded in securing several of his old Scorpions. He was, however, able to show hospitality to many distinguished friends, whose acquaintance he had made during the brief intervals when he had been at home, and who came to see him before sailing, among whom were the Duke of Gordon, the Earl of Seaforth, and the Earl and Countess of Aylesford, in honour of whom

it is recorded that salutes were duly fired as they quitted the vessel.

After touching at Spithead and Plymouth, the Romney sailed from the latter port on 10th June, and after a fair but uneventful voyage, reached St John's, Newfoundland, on the 10th July. The condition of the American coasts on Elphinstone's arrival may be described as one of armed hostility without open war; and very active preparations were going on in the fleet for provisioning and arming the royal garrisons, and for putting the naval stations in a thorough state of efficiency. The first duty that fell to the lot of the Romney was to bring round some troops from Placentia to St John's; and on 27th October Elphinstone sailed for England with a convoy, arriving at Spithead about the middle of the following month. This was Elphinstone's only voyage in the Romney; for, on the 8th March 1776, he was promoted to the Perseus, 20-gun frigate, then being victualled at Deptford for active service. Her destination was also North America, where she was intended to be employed in Lord Howe's fleet against the revolted colonists; and Elphinstone lost no time in taking command. On inspecting the ship he found she had been built by contract; and her defects were so great that he demanded a survey before putting to sea. The trouble and correspondence which a zealous and careful captain had in those days in moving the Admiralty to put his ship

in a proper condition was greater even than in our own time of organised routine; but Elphinstone's perseverance was indomitable, and if one application did not succeed, it was speedily followed by a second and third. When in the Romney he had incurred the displeasure of the medical authorities at the Admiralty, by giving a more liberal allowance of comforts to his sick and hurt seamen than the regulations prescribed, and a slight reprimand was sent him to the Perseus, about which he does not appear to have given himself any concern. Thoroughly strict in matters of discipline and duty, Elphinstone, even in the days when he was young in the navy, never hesitated to override the routine rules of departments by his own judgment when the welfare of his men and the higher good of the service was at stake; and he was always specially careful about the medical attendance of his crew and the proper care of the sick.

On the 28th July the Perseus sailed from Spithead for New York, with a convoy of eighteen vessels, taking out troops and provisions for Lord Howe and his brother General Howe. Elphinstone laid down very peremptory regulations for the conduct of the vessels accompanying him; but probably no captain had ever the misfortune to put to sea with a more refractory and disorderly convoy under his care. Notwithstanding Elphinstone's orders that the ships should keep together and in sight of the Perseus, the masters

seemed disposed to make the voyage an ocean race; and he had to keep constantly firing guns at them, as mild hints that his signals were to be attended to. Now he had to crowd sail to keep up with the foremost, and again to heave to, to allow the loiterers to get up. On 26th September the Perseus found a strange schooner among the convoy, which proved to be an armed rebel privateer, and gave her chase; but night came on, and she could not be distinguished amid the other vessels. On the next day, Elphinstone, after several rounds of firing, compelled her to strike, and found her to be the Viper, commissioned by Congress, and seven days from Boston. He took the prisoners on board the Perseus, and manned the prize. Next day he fell in with another American, the Betsy schooner, laden with dye-wood from Boston to Bordeaux, and seized her also. This troublesome voyage was ended on 14th October, when the Perseus with her convoy and prizes entered New York harbour, and Elphinstone put himself under the command of Lord Howe, whom he found there with a small squadron and a great number of transports.

The Perseus was almost immediately ordered out, to cruise off Sandy Hook in search of rebel privateers, and she was engaged in this duty during the whole of the winter months. It was cold and stormy work, and the Yankee vessels showed all the 'cuteness for which their nation has subsequently been dis-

tinguished; but Elphinstone, with his usual good fortune, was lucky enough to make several prizes, most of which were subsequently manned for the King's service. He was appointed by Lord Howe to the charge of the cruisers off Sandy Hook, and he kept them in constant occupation. In the beginning of January 1777, while cruising in company of the Camilla, the Honourable Captain Phipps, Elphinstone had an adventure with a French vessel, which occasioned him a good deal of perplexity, as we were then at peace with France. He had overhauled a French snow, which first attempted to escape, and afterwards put itself into his hands, with a long account of having suffered disaster, and of making 20 inches of water every hour. Elphinstone had reason to suspect that the vessel was bound for a port in the possession of the rebels; but all he could do under the circumstances was to send two officers on board, and to desire the master to keep close to the Perseus. The Frenchman made several attempts to get away, and to put himself in the hands of some Yankee privateers who came in sight; but the officers of the Perseus, at the peril of their lives, resisted the attempt; and the vessel was brought into New York and handed over to Lord Howe. The unusual minuteness with which Elphinstone explained the whole circumstances of this transaction—for his despatches generally are very brief—shows how anxious he was to avoid any acts that might complicate the

relations between the two countries; but that at the same time he was prepared to face even that risk rather than forgo any part of his duty.

In the end of January 1777 the Perseus formed one of a squadron which was despatched to cruise down to Antigua, rendezvousing off the mouth of the Delaware and at St Augustine in Florida. On the way down several rebel privateers were taken, and a provision transport, which had been betrayed to the enemy by the master, recaptured,—so that Elphinstone entered Antigua with quite a convoy of prizes under his stern.

While in Antigua harbour he was ordered by Vice-Admiral Young, then commanding the station, to transfer himself to the Pearl; and on 15th March Captain Hammond directed him to water his vessel in the Old Road of St Kitts, and proceed to the mouth of the Delaware, rendezvousing off Cape Henlopen. Here on 11th April he joined the squadron under Commodore Hotham, and was employed in making observations regarding the navigation of the Delaware, ignorance of which had proved of great inconvenience to his Majesty's ships. In the month of May he was shifted back again to the Perseus, and employed during the summer in ranging along the coasts of the Carolinas, Georgia, and East Florida, occasionally as far as St Augustine, for the purpose of cutting off the trade of the revolted colonies, and capturing and destroying their armed vessels. In

this service he had the Pearl and Camilla under his command. Elphinstone's usual luck as a prize-taker attended him on this service; for as he went along the coast he succeeded in cutting out several rebel privateers, and in capturing traders who were endeavouring to run the blockade.

In such duty the whole of the year 1777 was spent. The Perseus was kept constantly in motion, cruising up and down the American coast from Newfoundland to the West Indies; now chasing rebels, now escorting transports to victual the loyal forces, now making a descent upon the coasts to co-operate with the troops, when the shifting scene of the war was directed towards the seaboard. The duty was harassing, and the convoys were often troublesome and refractory; while the Perseus had to be ready to sail in any direction where there was news of privateers, at a moment's warning. Charlestown, then the great nucleus of rebellion in the south, was an object of Elphinstone's constant observation, and he repeatedly made daring attempts to look into the port, and obtained a knowledge of the harbour which stood him in good stead afterwards. With Elphinstone was associated Captains Hammond, Phipps, Fanshawe, Mackenzie, and occasionally Commodore Hotham, all of whom equally with himself earned distinction for the efficient blockade which they maintained. While the blockade was thus being maintained, the war on land had been prosecuted

with varying success. La Fayette and the French volunteer officers had joined the colonists, and raised their spirits with hopes of sympathy and speedy assistance from France. The British successes at Brandywine, Philadelphia, and Germantown had been clouded towards the end of the year by Burgoyne's capitulation at Saratoga; and the redoubled exertions of the colonists to equip ships made the duty of the British fleet more and more severe and harassing.

In the month of July of the following year, Captain Elphinstone was despatched to the coast of Florida, to co-operate with the Royal Governor Tonyn and General Prevost, in the gallant stand which they were making against the gathering force of the rebellion in that province. Philadelphia had just been evacuated before his departure; and Lord Howe had strongly impressed upon him the necessity of a vigorous counter-movement in the south on behalf of the Crown, as the readiest means of diverting the rebels and restoring the confidence in the Royalist cause. Tonyn the governor was an energetic and gallant officer; and he and Elphinstone strove zealously to assist the King's troops with provisions and with aid by sea, whenever an opportunity offered. While Florida had mainly remained loyal, the neighbouring state of Georgia was hotly republican; and it depended greatly on the British cause in the former state being successfully promoted, whether Georgia

was not to throw itself wholly into the colonial cause. Elphinstone on his arrival on the coast received the following flattering letter from General Prevost, which testifies to the respect in which his services were held by the officers of the Royal army:—

"COWFORD, 13*th July* 1778.

"The arrival of any of his Majesty's ships on this coast at the present juncture was to me a matter of the greatest pleasure, as by that I flatter myself the province is secured against any further insult from our rebel invaders, or at least that they will not be able to do us any essential mischief;—and give me leave to assure you, sir, that my pleasure was by no means diminished, but much increased, on finding that his Majesty's ships employed on this coast were, by his Excellency Lord Howe, put under your direction, as I well know the active zeal with which you are animated for his Majesty's service, and have the highest opinion of your abilities to carry it on with propriety. I shall with the highest goodwill and confidence co-operate with you in every possible measure for forwarding the service; and most happy shall I reckon myself, if by our mutual endeavours, in conjunction with his Excellency the Governor, we can render any essential service to our Sovereign."

Elphinstone's energy, and the assistance which he was able to render to the operations of the

Royal troops, neutralised the activity of the Georgia rebels, and postponed for a time the final loss of the province of Florida. He equipped an expedition for cutting out the American armament, which was preparing in St Mary's for a descent on the Florida coast, and offered, with 250 troops and with the Perseus, Otter, and a few provincial vessels that were available, to force his way into that port, or to penetrate to Savannah and Sunbury. The authorities at St Augustine's, however, appear to have been apprehensive that on the departure of the Perseus the enemy might abandon the idea of a descent by sea, and march against them; and taking advantage of a report of disease and dissension prevailing among the Georgia forces, they were content in the meantime to hold their ground. It probably would have been of little consequence to the ultimate issue of the war; but it seems reasonable to suppose that, had Elphinstone's zeal been seconded by the provincial officers, the prospects of the Royal cause in the extreme south might at this time have been greatly forwarded.

The Perseus was recalled to New York in November, and Elphinstone put himself under the orders of Rear-Admiral Gambier, who had temporarily succeeded Lord Howe in command of the fleet. The pleasant relations and mutual confidence which had existed between Elphinstone and Viscount Howe did not continue with his successor; and it must have

been a matter of congratulation for the former when he shortly afterwards found himself serving under the command of Admiral Byron, who treated him with great confidence. In January 1779, Captain Elphinstone was despatched to cruise southward along the American coast, from Cape Corneveral to Cape Fear, and to make for St Lucia in the West Indies. On the voyage, a few hours after leaving Sandy Hook, the Perseus encountered two severe hurricanes, which almost reduced her to a wreck. So violent was the gale that every shroud and lanyard in the ship gave way, as did every rope of consequence. The masts were badly sprung; some of the sails were lost; and the captain's skill was severely tried in bringing the vessel into English Harbour, where he had to refit. Elphinstone, however, arrived in the West Indies in time to be present at the capture of St Lucia by Major-General Grant; and was charged by Admiral Byron with the command of a small squadron, to cruise about the Islands and observe the French, and to frustrate attempts against the sugar plantations. The only notable incident in this service was a dispute with the Dutch, who several times fired upon the King's colours, and manifested a disposition to assist the enemy's privateers, when chased by Elphinstone's squadron into their ports. For this insult Elphinstone demanded redress; and after much trouble on his part, and equivocation on that of

the officers of the States-General, he succeeded in obtaining it.

In the month of May he was back again on the coast of Florida, where, in spite of the successes that had attended the King's forces in the south, and the capture of Savannah, the Royal cause was again in a languishing condition. General Prevost, who held command in Savannah, was far from hopeful about the condition of the southern provinces. There was disease in the army, and distrust of the future, even among these colonists who had cast in their lot most unreservedly with the British side. Elphinstone remained there for the most part until the month of September, making efforts to assist the forces on shore, which were seldom successful, as the enemy took care not to hazard engagements at any point where men and guns could be landed from the ships. The war was then languishing on both sides, and Elphinstone does not seem to have had much hopes of being able to assist the King's arms, but he maintained a close correspondence with all the generals in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina, and held the Perseus in readiness to second any operations that might be set on foot.

When the Perseus returned to New York in September, Elphinstone found Admiral Marriot Arbuthnot—an old and experienced sailor, who had been a commander in the navy in the year Elphinstone himself was born—commanding-in-chief on the American

station. Arbuthnot, in spite of his years, was full of vigour, and determined to keep the fleet active on the coast, threatened as it then was by the return of the Count d'Estaing with his squadron from the West Indies. The Perseus was not suffered to remain many days in port; but was despatched to cruise off Sandy Hook again, and to look frequently into Chesapeake Bay. In the month of October an incident occurred to Elphinstone, which may in some respects rank as an earlier parallel to the Mason and Slidell episode of the American civil war. As it is an interesting precedent of international law, as practised by the King's officers in the good old days of George III., the correspondence on the subject shall be quoted at length.

"PERSEUS, OFF NEW YORK,
October 27, 1779.

"SIR,—I have the honour to acquaint you that the two passengers that had obtained the pretended flag of truce from the governor of St Croix, have given me to understand they will prosecute me for detaining their vessel, unless I immediately dismiss them. I have consulted the Attorney-General on the subject, who says it is a new case, and as there was no cargo on board, the vessel does not immediately fall under the Prohibitory Act; but that infinite evils may arise from such practices, such as supplying rebels with vessels fit for arming, convey-

ing intelligence with safety, &c. In consequence, I have declined libelling the above vessel until I have your directions; and that you may be the more able to judge, I take the liberty of transmitting the circumstances as they stand. The sloop was taken twenty leagues off this port, bound to Boston, with two gentlemen on board with their families, all of them the King's subjects, of this place —one a brother to Mr Kruger, member of Parliament [Congress]. The vessel is completely fitted for war; that is to say, having fourteen ports and good quarters, but no guns on board. The master and mate are both Americans. There are no letters from the governor of the Danish Islands to the rebel governor of Boston, or any request on his part, only a permission to land these men at that place on the pretence of bad health; but in fact their whole furniture, plate, &c., &c., are on board. I asked if it would not have been more natural for men in bad health to have come to live with their own wives' relations than among strangers, without getting any satisfactory answer. Captain Inglis and myself have no sort of objection to relinquish the vessel if you please; or, to convince the Court of Denmark that we are disinterested, to put her into your hand to prosecute, and in case of condemnation to let proceeds be disposed of as the Admiralty may please to direct; but I do not think myself authorised to liberate a vessel under circumstances which may produce so much

evil, without directions from you on that head. Nor is it my opinion it should be dismissed at all, and a complaint of the governor sent to Denmark.—I have the honour to be, with due esteem, sir, your most obedient and obliged humble servant,

"GEO. KEITH ELPHINSTONE.

"Admiral ARBUTHNOT,
Europe, Sandy Hook."

"EUROPE, SANDY HOOK, *October 30th.*

"SIR,—The Admiral is so much employed as to be unable to answer your letter relative to the pretended flag of truce; and desires me to acquaint you that he is surprised to hear people talk so absurdly and so presumptuously as those do who talk of prosecuting you. The Admiral further desires that all the King's subjects who have been found on board of her may be confined as prisoners in the prison-ship; but particularly that, if Mr Anson is on board, *he* may be put in irons; and that the vessel may be without delay libelled in the Admiralty Courts. The Admiral is of opinion that the King of Denmark, not being at war, can have no right whatever to grant flags of truce to vessels bound to places at open war with another power or in rebellion; and that the governor of St Croix presumes very much to interfere between Great Britain and the colonies, contrary to the spirit of her laws and to her nearest interest. As to the vessel being in

ballast, she is, as a vessel, a very material article of commerce. The governor of St Croix should have applied to some governor or commanding officer in the service of the King of Great Britain to obtain a pass for his vessel. I hope you find yourself better since going to town.—I am, &c.,

"WILLIAM SWINEY.

"The Hon. Captain ELPHINSTONE,
Perseus."

The only other adventure that befell Captain Elphinstone during the latter part of 1779 was the capture, on 22d November, off Cape Charles in Virginia, of the French ship La Therèse. The Therèse mounted 20 guns, the same number as the Perseus, but carried swivels besides, and was manned by 72 men, who gave Elphinstone sharp work for forty minutes, and did considerable damage to the masts, sails, and rigging of the Perseus before she struck. She proved to be a valuable prize in several ways, as she had come out of Charlestown, South Carolina, freighted with provisions and clothes for the Count d'Estaing's fleet; and Elphinstone was warmly congratulated on his good fortune by Admiral Arbuthnot when he appeared with his prize a few days later off Sandy Hook.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAPTURE OF CHARLESTOWN.

1779–1780.

At the end of 1779 the King's military and naval commanders assembled at New York resolved to attempt the reduction of Charlestown, in South Carolina, which all through the war had successfully resisted the attacks of the Royal arms. Since June 1776, when Sir Peter Parker had been compelled to withdraw from before the town, with a shattered fleet and the loss of a large number of officers and men, after a ten hours' engagement, and Clinton and Cornwallis had been simultaneously obliged to raise the siege which they had attempted by land,—the capital of South Carolina, protected by its difficult bar, by the strongly fortified islands in the harbour, and by the unanimous and enthusiastic republican spirit of its citizens, had remained almost wholly unmolested in its fidelity to Congress, except for an ineffectual attempt which Prevost had made to invest it in May 1779. Charlestown offered a most effectual

barrier to the northward progress of the Royal successes in Florida and Georgia; and its reduction, though long postponed in consequence of the demand for the services of the forces and fleet in the north, and the presence off the coast of the Count d'Estaing and his squadron, now became an essential measure. Clinton was to attack by land, and Admiral Arbuthnot with the fleet was to attempt the harbour entrance; while Elphinstone was despatched in advance to collect galleys, transports, and provisions against the arrival of the expedition. He got together in the Savannah river a squadron of galleys and a quantity of stores; and then took up his station in North Edisto river to wait for Sir Henry Clinton and the Admiral's arrival early in February 1780.

Admiral Arbuthnot shifted his flag from the Europe to the Roebuck, 74 guns, a vessel built on a new plan, which had been a new ship at the beginning of the war, and, under its captain, afterwards Sir Andrew Hammond, had done excellent service all through the American troubles. With the Roebuck sailed the Europe, 74, Captain Ardesoise; the Russell, 74, Captain Drake; Robuste, 74, Captain Crosby; Defiance, 64, Jacobs; Raisonable, 64, Fitzherbert; Renown, 50, Dawson; Romulus, 44, Gayton; Blonde, 32; Virginia, 32, John Orde; Raleigh, 32, Evans; Camilla, 32, Clinton; and the Germain of 14 guns.

Sir Henry Clinton's transports were detained by

rough weather, as the Admiral had also been, and did not land at John's Island, thirty miles from Charlestown, until 11th February. His position was very critical, for he had not the support of the fleet, and there were rumours of a gathering of the rebel forces to relieve the town. On the 18th he wrote to Elphinstone: "For God's sake let all the galleys get into Stono as soon as possible. Let us have a few heavy guns ashore, and we will establish ourselves on James's Island. Till that is done I shall not be easy. It is impossible to say how much we are obliged to you for your exertions; to them we owe everything — from them we shall expect everything."

When Admiral Arbuthnot arrived off Charlestown, the tempestuous state of the weather made it impossible to attempt the bar; and Elphinstone, with Captain Evans of the Raleigh as his second in command, was allowed to go on shore with a force of marines, 450 in number, to assist the troops. Clinton was lying beyond the Ashley river, and did not cross to Charlestown Neck until Elphinstone was ready to join. "I may probably guess at the cause," writes the General to the latter, "which prevents your return to us. Whenever you do come, I request you bring with you the 71st Regiment, and all the boats, &c., our good friend the Admiral can spare. You are so much of a soldier that you know our wants and can best state them. General Paterson

is near us. I move a corps this day to facilitate the junction, and have all prepared to pass the Ashley when you come with the boats to do it. I am sure you will forgive my anxiously wishing to see you; you are of so much consequence to us that we cannot stir without your assistance." Elphinstone joined Sir Henry Clinton soon after this letter was written, and brought with him twenty-one boats and a galley. The crossing of the Ashley was effected without molestation on 29th March; and the British began to make formal preparations for investing the town. The undertaking was a very formidable one, for the Americans had made good use of the time during which they had remained in expectation of an attack, and had thrown a strong chain of fortifications across the neck of land between the Ashley and Cooper rivers, with redoubts and batteries, on which were mounted eighty pieces of cannon and mortars. On the side of the harbour the town was defended not less by the American fleet and by the strong fortifications on Sullivan's Island, than by the dangerous bar, with its narrow channel full of breakers, and confined by a sandbank. Clinton had only the guns that could be landed from the ships; and of them it was scarcely possible to spare a sufficient number for the land operations, if the fleet were to render assistance from the harbour. In these difficult circumstances the hopes of the General and the Admiral alike appear from their letters to

have rested on Elphinstone's zeal and ability, as he was the connecting link between the land and sea services.

After the forces had settled down before the town, they were obliged to postpone the attack, as the weather still prevented Admiral Arbuthnot from crossing the bar. It was a period of intense anxiety for all parties. The troops were exposed to the risk of the enemy's fire, and to the chance of sorties, and every day's delay added to the danger of the town being relieved by a continental force.

On 2d April the Admiral wrote to Elphinstone: "I have not the smallest doubt but that everything that can be, is, done; but my impatience for the success of Sir Henry is in the extreme. The moment I can give him the smallest assistance by a diversion with the ships I will embrace it. The enemy has been busy yesterday in blocking up part of the channel by sinking four vessels; but this day has been so foggy that I cannot determine whether it is the Hog-Island channel, to prevent our entrance into Cooper River, or the Ship channel towards Johnson's Fort; but we will endeavour to be informed, so as to be in readiness to assist as soon as we can be of use."

The British on land at length broke ground, and pushed their lines briskly up to the enemy's works, Elphinstone and his marines showing great activity in manning the batteries. The good old Admiral was extremely solicitous about the sailors employed in

the investment, and repeatedly enjoined Elphinstone to allow them to act under no command except his own or that of his officers. "I need not recommend to you," he writes to Elphinstone on April 4th, "to have a fatherly care of the seamen, for I am sure you will contribute by every possible means to their comfort. I beg to request by every opportunity your favourable accounts, which are the only consolations we can have in our present situation."

By April 9th the Admiral had got his vessels inside the bar, and the American squadron of nine ships anchored to impede his passage into the harbour suddenly lost heart and sought refuge in the Cooper river, although supported by the guns on the strong position of Fort Moultrie in Sullivan's Island, which had beaten back Parker's squadron four years before. As the American ships retired, they sank four vessels in the narrow Hog-Island channel leading into the Cooper river.

Meanwhile the troops and sailors on Charlestown Neck had been pushing the siege with vigour on their side; and as soon as the Admiral was in a position to act, the town was summoned to surrender. Lincoln, who commanded, sent back a reply that he would hold out to the last; and a heavy fire was opened upon the defenders from the British lines, which the gunboats and galleys in the harbour seconded as well as they could, harassing the enemy by night, while Clinton kept them occupied dur-

ing the day. The ammunition on the British side ran short; and although supplies were ordered from St Augustine, the Admiral met Elphinstone's requests for more shot with prayers to be frugal and to take careful aim. This deficiency was a serious drawback, for the fate of the town depended upon the briskness with which the fire could be maintained. The American cavalry, which had been employed in keeping open communications beyond the Cooper river, were routed by Colonel Tarleton; and Lincoln's hopes of relief became daily lessened. On the 13th, to the great joy of the fleet, Elphinstone with his batteries succeeded in setting fire to the town, but the flames were speedily got under. Advantage, however, was taken of this impression, and of the completion of the second parallel by the British, to send another summons to the town to surrender, which was treated with more respect than the first message had received. Lincoln held a council of war, and agreed to capitulate upon conditions which Clinton, however, did not feel himself justified in acceding to; and the siege was resumed with more vigour than before. An impression prevailed that the garrison would try to escape; and Elphinstone fitted out galleys on the Cooper river to cut off their retreat in the event of such an attempt. The gallant old Admiral refused to the last to believe in the rebels getting away until they had been made to suffer a signal punishment; and irritated at his ill

luck in having been kept so remote from the hotter part of the siege, he was eager that a severe lesson should be read to the colonists, and their town utterly destroyed.

On the 9th April Arbuthnot passed Sullivan's Island under a heavy fire; but it was impossible to get soundings of the Hog-Island channel, as it lay within musket-shot of the American batteries, and our galleys and boats were soon compelled to retire by the hotness of their fire. The position of Mount Pleasant was seized on the 29th, as well as the redoubt at the entrance of the bridge leading into Sullivan's Island, and a force of sailors and marines were landed; and Fort Moultrie soon after struck its flag. When these obstructions were removed from the harbour, Arbuthnot was able to press the town more closely; but the sunken American vessels, the difficult channels, and the rough weather even inside the bar, greatly retarded his exertions.

After the opening of Clinton's third parallel, a desperate attempt was made to carry the town by the land side, in which Elphinstone and Evans, with their sailors and marines, took a distinguished part. Their heavy fire quelled the ardour of the defenders, and amid the confusion the British penetrated into their works and captured some of their guns. The Admiral, too, had at last got within an effective distance of the town; and Lincoln found that his gallant defence could be no longer sustained. A

capitulation was signed on 12th May; and the enemy were allowed to quit the town with the honours of war, and surrender their arms to the British outside. Lincoln had made a gallant defence; and had the ships of Whipple, the American Commodore, behaved equally well, and made the most of the great natural advantages the harbour presented for defence, the siege might have been much longer protracted. The fall of Charlestown was one of the most brilliant successes that fell to the Royal arms throughout this unhappy struggle. Over 6000 Americans and Frenchmen became prisoners of war, about 400 pieces of ordnance fell into the hands of the British; and four vessels of war, besides a polacre and a number of galleys and empty brigs, were taken, as well as a large quantity of naval stores. The fall of Charlestown placed the Royal cause for a time in the ascendant in South Carolina; and sanguine hopes were entertained that the rebellion would speedily be put down all throughout the South.

Where so many gallant officers were striving with all their might to earn honours in the siege, it was not easy to win special distinction; but Elphinstone's conduct all throughout the operations received the highest compliments both from Sir Henry Clinton and from the Admiral. It was by his exertions in collecting galleys, boats, and timber that the passage of the Ashley was safely accomplished by Clinton's troops. He acted as the Admiral's representative on

shore, and was the medium of communication between the army and the fleet. In the trenches and in the attacks upon the American lines he displayed that capacity for leading men on land, of which he was afterwards to give signal proofs in his subsequent services. Sir Henry Clinton in his despatches fully acknowledged the benefit he had derived from Elphinstone's gallant and spirited exertions; and the Admiral marked his satisfaction with his conduct by selecting his ship, the Perseus, to take home his second in command, Sir Andrew Hammond, with his despatches announcing the fall of Charlestown. Perhaps the most pleasant congratulations that Elphinstone received were those that came so frankly in letters from his brother captains; showing that he had incurred no jealousies by the excellent use he had made of his opportunities, and that his character was appreciated and esteemed by all grades of his own service.

The Perseus with the despatches sailed soon after the fall of Charlestown, arriving in England early in July; and in the next session of Parliament the thanks of both Houses were voted to Sir Henry Clinton, Admiral Arbuthnot, and their officers, for their gallant conduct. After four years of hard and uninterrupted service on the American coast, Elphinstone was glad to visit his family, and recruit himself by a furlough, which the exigencies of the service could only allow to be a brief one.

CHAPTER VI.

WARWICK AND CARYSFORT.

1780–1792.

ELPHINSTONE on his arrival in England found his position very different from that in which he had come home from the Mediterranean as captain of the Scorpion, only five years before. He had no reason now to complain of the inactivity of a naval career, or of want of prospects in his profession. The distinction which he had won at Charlestown had brought him to the notice of both the Court and the Admiralty; and might be depended upon to lead to further active employment in the extended area of warfare, which was even then opening up. He had been singularly fortunate in capturing rich prizes; and the pecuniary rewards of his exertions in America were sufficient to lay a sound foundation of future independence.

Almost as soon as he arrived, Elphinstone received a token of the approbation of Government by his promotion to the command of the Warwick,

50 guns; and as the vessel was then fitting out to join the Channel fleet, he was not tied down to his ship, but was enabled to enjoy his much needed furlough. His ambition prompted him to seek a seat in Parliament, more for the sake of forwarding his professional prospects, than for any burning interest he took in politics. Although a Whig by principles and training, Elphinstone had no sympathy with the unpatriotic spirit which that party had displayed when in Opposition in time of war; and it was probably due to this feeling that he did not take a more prominent part in politics, during the not very frequent intervals when the duties of the service left him free to attend on the business of the House.

While Elphinstone was at home, a general election took place in the autumn of 1780, and as about that time he was paying a visit to his family in Scotland, he was persuaded to stand for the county of Dumbarton, where his family had some interest. The election was the most spirited contest that Dumbartonshire had then ever witnessed. Not only were the current political tests of the day appealed to, but clan antipathies, and the half-forgotten memories of Jacobitism and the Hanoverian usurpation, were freely invoked to make the battle warmer. The struggle turned less upon the distinction between the political principles of the candidates than upon the old feud between the houses of Montrose and Argyll,

of which it was probably the last active manifestation. Elphinstone was the Montrose nominee, while opposed to him was Lord Frederick Campbell, the Duke of Argyll's brother, who was better known in the county than Elphinstone, and who held the pledges of a majority of the older freeholders. To make up for this, a number of new qualifications had been created by the Grahame and Smollett families; but these had to be in existence for a full year before votes upon them could become valid. The dissolution happened at a critical moment for the new freeholders; and Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, who was then Sheriff of the county, and also an enthusiastic supporter of the Argyll interest, fixed the day of election twenty-four hours before the qualifications of the new freeholders were complete. Elphinstone's friends, however, were not to be thus foiled, and they determined that the new votes should have time to mature before the poll was allowed to close; and that the Sheriff should be deprived of his night's rest as a punishment for his precipitation. The Montrose party brought down counsel from Edinburgh to defend the sufficiency of some of their votes from the Lennox, which had been challenged; and the advocates, among whom was Henry Erskine, were instructed to protract the controversy until after midnight. This they did by talking against time, in spite of the remonstrances of the Sheriff, who saw himself caught in his own trap; and as twelve

o'clock struck, Elphinstone's friends put forward the votes of the new freeholders, which had now been in existence for the full twelve months. The Campbells, however, retorted that the election must be held to have terminated on the same day as that on which it had begun; and a bitter controversy between the two parties prevailed from midnight until five o'clock next morning, when Sir James Colquhoun, the Sheriff, declared in favour of the Argyll party, and rejected the new votes tendered in favour of Captain Elphinstone. Lord Frederick was returned member by a majority of nine; and Elphinstone's friends at once commenced proceedings in the Court of Session on account of the rejected votes; but before the cases could come on for hearing, Lord Frederick retired—"struck his colours to the Warwick"—as he himself expressed it, alluding to the name of Captain Elphinstone's vessel.

Elphinstone does not appear however to have taken any part in the stormy debates of 1780-81, and was, we know, oftener on board his vessel than in the House. This was indeed fortunate for him; for while he could have earned little distinction in the No Popery discussions and in the parliamentary panic which accompanied them, he had an opportunity of performing a feat in the Channel, which, following so soon after his honours earned at Charlestown, brought his name very prominently before the Admiralty and the public.

While on a cruise down the Channel, the Warwick fell in with the Dutch 50-gun ship the Rotterdam, which, not long before, had acquired an evil notoriety in Britain by beating off the Isis, 50 guns, Captain Evelyn Sutton. The Rotterdam had fought stoutly on that occasion, and Captain Sutton, although no blame appears to have justly attached to him, was tried for neglect of duty, and received a severe reprimand. Elphinstone's despatch to the secretary of the Admiralty, which, like all his letters describing his services, is very brief and modest, will give the best, or at least the most concise, account of the action.

"WARWICK, *7th January* 1781.

"SIR,—I have the honour to inform the Board of the arrival of his Majesty's ship under my command, and of my having cruised in company with the Edgar and Maidstone on the station pointed out by my orders; also that, on the 5th instant, having parted company with the above ships, I fell in with and took a two-decked ship under Dutch colours (after having admonished her to surrender without effect). She is the Rotterdam, belonging to the States-General, of 50 guns and 300 men, commanded by Mynheer Volbergen, eleven days from Holland, bound for the West Indies. They had been twice attacked before this period. I had the good fortune to lose no men. The sails, masts, and

rigging are cut to pieces. I have great satisfaction in acknowledging the obligations I am under to the officers of each class. The ship's company, notwithstanding their being young in the service, and reduced in number by the several Dutch vessels we had manned and sent into port, conducted themselves with becoming activity and spirit.—I am, &c.,

"G. K. ELPHINSTONE."

While the laurels of this achievement were still fresh, Elphinstone was again ordered out to North America, to take part in the last efforts that were being made for the reassertion of the British supremacy.

The Warwick formed one of the squadron commanded by Rear-Admiral Digby; but Elphinstone was fortunate in being able himself to command in one of the few brilliant naval engagements that occurred in the last years of the American War of Independence. On the 15th September 1782, while cruising off the mouth of the Delaware with the Lion, 64 guns, Captain William Fooks—the Vestal, 28-gun frigate, Captain William Fox — and the Bonetta, sloop, Commander R. G. Keats,—under his command, the Warwick sighted two French vessels, which turned out to be L'Aigle and La Gloire. The Frenchmen made sail, and succeeded in entering the Delaware, closely followed by Elphinstone; but the Gloire, which was a light vessel, managed to escape

up the river, whither the British, who had no pilot acquainted with the channel, could not venture to pursue her. L'Aigle, a 40-gun vessel, 1002 tons burden, grounded not far from the entrance, and Elphinstone prepared to attack her. Transferring 150 seamen and marines to the Vestal and the Bonetta and the St Sophie, a prize of 22 guns which he had shortly before fallen in with and placed under the command of Lieutenant Lock, he despatched these vessels, as making less water, to the attack. L'Aigle was strongly manned as well as heavily armed. Of her 40 guns 28 were 24-pounders; and she had 12 long 8-pounders mounted on her quarter-deck and forecastle. She had 600 seamen, as well as a considerable body of troops on board, and was calculated to offer a terrible resistance. Elphinstone, however, had given judicious orders as to the plan of attack, and instructed the Vestal and the Bonetta as to how they might best evade the heavy fire that was to be expected. Unfortunately the Vestal ran aground on L'Aigle's starboard quarter; but the Bonetta succeeded on the larboard in dropping her anchor within 200 yards of the grounded vessel, while the Sophie ran under her stern. The result was that the French were unable to bring a gun to bear on their assailants, while the Bonetta and the Sophie began to pour shot into L'Aigle. Count la Touche, the captain, anxious to save some portion of the specie which he had on board, succeeded in escaping on

shore in the confusion of the attack, with a considerable quantity of treasure; while his officers exerted themselves to dismantle the ship, scuttling her and cutting away the masts. A disappointment scarcely less than that of the loss of the treasure was the escape of La Fayette and several other French officers of high rank, who were passengers on board L'Aigle. The English, however, secured what was left of the specie, embracing two boxes and two small casks; and L'Aigle was got off and taken in tow. The prize was repaired and refitted, and the Admiral appointed Captain Elphinstone to command her; but before his warrant could take effect he was transferred to the Carysfort, his new post being confirmed by the Admiralty on 24th May 1783.

While in command of the Warwick, a marked token of the royal appreciation of his American services was shown to Elphinstone. Prince William Henry, afterwards William IV., had joined the American fleet at a time when the indignant exclamation was wrung from Burke: "It is a horrid spectacle which must meet the eyes of a prince of the blood, who cannot sail along the American coast without beholding the faithful adherents of his father hanging in quarters on every headland." The Prince, attracted by Elphinstone's character and rising reputation, elected to serve under him in the Warwick as a midshipman, and joined that vessel in the autumn of 1782; and then was laid the foundation of a

mutual friendship and esteem between the Prince and Elphinstone, which continued to be maintained during both their lives, and which later on was strengthened by Elphinstone's appointment as Comptroller and Treasurer of his Royal Highness's Household when he was created Duke of Clarence.

At the close of the war Elphinstone returned to Britain, and resumed his duties in Parliament. He took part in the series of meetings held in the St Alban's Tavern, during the months of January and February 1784, for the purpose of devising a basis of union between the Duke of Portland and Fox and Pitt. This project seems to have been specially favoured by the naval members, for the list of gentlemen who were in the habit of meeting and dining at the St Alban's contains the names of several of Elphinstone's companions in arms. The attempt to build up a "broad-bottomed administration" naturally failed, as Pitt refused to leave the Shelburne Ministry, and the Duke of Portland would not treat with him so long as he continued a member of the Cabinet. And so the "country gentlemen," as they were called, gave up this attempt; and after this we hear very little of Elphinstone's parliamentary appearances. At the general election of the same year he was again returned for Dumbartonshire, which he continued to represent until 1790, when he was elected for Stirlingshire. He always ranked, during the time he was in the House of

Commons, as a member of the party which, differing in many points from the two great political divisions of the Legislature, and approaching both in particular respects, was known as the "country gentlemen."

Until the beginning of the war with France found Elphinstone again in active employment, there is little of note to record in his history. On 10th April 1787 he was married to Miss Mercer of Aldie, the heiress and representative of an old Perthshire family, and in the line of succession to the Scotch barony of Nairne, which then, however, lay under an attainder. A daughter, the only issue of this marriage, was born at Hertford Street, London, on 12th June 1788. His life at this time seems to have been that of a county member of Parliament, striving to do his duty to his constituents; taking a moderate interest in politics, from what was then called a constitutional point of view, but not aspiring to place himself in the front rank of party. At a time when the naval service was probably richer in captains of renown and experience than at any other period of our history, before or subsequently, Elphinstone had made a distinct reputation of his own, as combining the capacities of both a soldier and a seaman; and he could afford to wait patiently until the country required his services, assured that he would be placed in a position worthy of his abilities.

CHAPTER VII.

HE DESCENT UPON TOULON.

1793–1794.

of horror which the execution of King sent through the feelings of the British l the anger provoked by the insulting d aggressive acts of the French Republi- ds this country, made all classes of poli- cept Mr Fox and the reduced minority nued to adhere to him, join enthusiastically Government in undertaking a war against ples of the Revolution. Like the majority Whigs, Elphinstone was a warm supporter t's policy. When war became probable, he ng the first officers selected by the Admiralty e service; and on 2d February 1793, he ointed captain of the Robust, 74 guns, ched to the Mediterranean fleet under Lord In the summer months of that year Elphin- as employed by the Admiral to cruise off the h coast with a squadron of five vessels, among

which was the Agamemnon, Captain Nelson, under his orders. During the month of June these ships were off Cadiz, whence they were directed to join Lord Hood in the Mediterranean, in the descent which the Government proposed to make on the coast of Provence to aid the Royalist reaction, which the atrocious excesses of the Revolutionary Committee had provoked among the population of southern France.

The centres of this reaction were Lyons, Marseilles, and Toulon, and there was good hope that if timely assistance and encouragement were afforded, the revolt against the Republic might spread over the whole south. General Carteaux, however, with an army of 10,000 men, had been at once despatched to cut off communication between the two former towns; and contrived to hold both in check, until he was sufficiently reinforced to be able to reduce them. Under these circumstances, Britain resolved to send an expedition to Toulon, and Lord Hood with his fleet was directed to proceed thither and act with the Royalists, if they were in a position to make a stand. His instructions were to ascertain the feeling of the citizens of Toulon, and assure himself whether the reaction against the Jacobins and in favour of the monarchy which had set in there, as well as at Marseilles and Lyons, was sufficiently important to be turned to advantage. It was not, however, until the middle of August that Lord Hood

arrived off Toulon, and by that time the terrible vengeance which the Republican authorities were taking upon those of the insurgents who fell into their power, was beginning to damp the ardour of the Royalists. Lord Hood had a fine fleet of twenty-one sail of the line, besides smaller vessels and transports; he was assisted by Admirals Sir Hyde Parker, Hotham, Cosby, Goodall, and Gell; and he had two regiments on board. The Robust, commanded by Elphinstone, formed one of the fleet. In Toulon harbour there were seventeen sail of the French line; but these were commanded by an ardent Royalist, the Count de Trogoff; and Lord Hood had reason to expect to find in him more a friend than an enemy. Accordingly, when Lord Hood arrived off the port, commissioners from Toulon boarded his flag-ship the Victory, to learn on what terms he would be prepared to receive the surrender of the port and the fleet, and assured him that they were the representatives of a feeling which pervaded the whole south of France. Lord Hood demanded as a proof of their sincerity that they should proclaim Louis XVII., hoist the Royal standard, and dismantle the ships in the harbour; and at the same time he guaranteed the security of private property, and the full restoration of the city, port, and ships, as soon as peace was concluded. The Admiral published a general proclamation to the south of France calling upon the cities and towns

to re-establish the monarchy; but this manifesto had very little effect on the popular feeling. Toulon, an old naval arsenal of the French kings, with a large number of old officers, contractors, and employees of the navy among its most influential citizens, was at heart loyal, and the recent executions of the King and Queen, and the daily news of bloodshed that was arriving from Paris, had worked the feelings of the inhabitants through revenge and fear up to a white heat. But though Count de Trogoff was actively disposed to favour the British attempt, his second in command, Admiral St Julien, declared for the Jacobins, and after endeavouring to oppose the surrender of the fleet, drew away with a considerable force to the forts on the left side of the harbour, and threatened to fire on the British ships as they entered. But in Toulon itself the general committee of the Sections was strong enough to quell Republican opposition to the English proposals.

Lord Hood sent a lieutenant on shore, empowered to arrange the details of surrender, who, after two days' absence, during which his life had been in great jeopardy from the violence of the Republicans, returned with a French officer commissioned to accept the Admiral's terms. The conditions of surrender were formally ratified, Louis XVII. was proclaimed, and the white flag hoisted on the 26th August; but the Royalist satisfaction was considerably damped by the news that Marseilles had yielded to General

Carteaux on the previous day, and that the usual scenes of butchery had already begun.

To disperse St Julien and his adherents, Captain Elphinstone, with a force of 1500 men, was despatched at midnight on the 27th, and succeeded in effecting a landing without meeting any serious opposition. The fort of La Malgue, standing on a hill and commanding the entrance to the inner harbour, was believed to be still held by Admiral St Julien, and Elphinstone at once prepared to attack it; but closer investigation showed next day that the Republicans had deserted it during the night, and English vessels were allowed to enter the inner roads unmolested, while Elphinstone with his force had taken possession of La Malgue by mid-day.

On the afternoon of the same day, 28th August, the Spanish fleet of seventeen sail, under Don Juan de Langara, arrived at Toulon; and Lord Hood issued a proclamation to the people of the south of France, announcing that he had taken possession of the town and harbour, to hold it in trust for Louis XVII. until peace was re-established. On the same evening Elphinstone's garrison of La Malgue was strengthened by the addition of 1000 Spaniards, whose services proved of but very doubtful advantage during the rest of the operations on shore.

The occupation of Toulon and the defection of the fleet were disasters sufficient to alarm the Republic, with La Vendée upon its hands, Lyons still

in insurrection, and the Coalition armies closing in upon France on all sides. "On Toulon arsenal there flies a flag," exclaims Carlyle—"nay, not even the fleur-de-lys of a Louis Pretender; there flies that accursed St George's cross of the English and Admiral Hood! What remnant of sea-craft, arsenals, roperies, war-navy France had, has given itself to these enemies of human nature, '*enemis du genre humain.*'" The reduction of Toulon became a pressing necessity for the Revolutionary Committee; and Carteaux was exhorted to bestir himself and drive off the invaders with as little delay as possible.

Meanwhile the Admiral lost no time in organising a government for the city, and in making all possible dispositions for its defence. Rear-Admiral Goodall was made commandant of the town, and Elphinstone was placed in charge of the forts on the east of the harbour, with his headquarters at La Malgue, and his duties kept him on shore during the whole period of the occupation. From La Malgue he could command the city and its eastward communications, and he was also charged to cut off all attempts from the outside to strengthen the Republican factions within Toulon. The activity and alertness which he displayed in the conduct of his command speedily won him the Admiral's entire confidence; while his skill in handling men on shore made his services as a commander indispensable until the arrival of a military officer of rank, who could

take charge of the defensive operations around the town. The Spanish Admiral, Gravina, had been by Lord Hood's courtesy made nominal commander of the troops until a British field-officer should arrive; but it was soon apparent that the Allies were not prepared to work heartily with the British; and the most of the subsequent disadvantages which befell our posts were due to their apathy and inefficiency.

On 30th August news reached Elphinstone at La Malgue that an advanced body of Carteaux's troops, with cavalry and ten pieces of cannon, had reached the pass of Ollioules, which commanded almost the only means of communication between Toulon and the interior that was then available for troops. Taking a force of 300 British and an equal number of Spaniards, Elphinstone advanced by a route between Toulon and Mont Faron, and after a march of six miles halted near the inside of the Ollioules gorge. On reconnoitring, they found that the French had taken up a strong position in the village, situated on a steep hillside, with a ravine in front, spanned by a stone bridge, on which the enemy had planted cannon; while in the ruins of an old castle above the village two guns had been posted, commanding the road by which the English would have to advance. French infantry were scattered about the heights on the right and left of the town, to prevent any attempts at enflanking the main position; and, sheltered by the vineyards, they could pour

an effective fire into the enemy without exposing themselves. Elphinstone thought it imprudent to attack a force so strongly posted, and despatched a message to Toulon for assistance. No auxiliaries came, however; and finding night approaching, and knowing that he must either attack or retire upon the town, in which latter case the environs of Toulon would fall into the hands of the French, Elphinstone began the assault at half-past six o'clock in the evening. Ordering forward flanking parties, to clear the vine-clad eminences on both sides of the ravine of the French skirmishers, and directing incessant firing to be kept up on the cannon on the bridge, he prepared to make a dash for the village. Captain Moncrieff and Don Montero, with a body of British and Spaniards, profiting by the cover of a stone wall, got within two hundred yards of the bridge. This movement had not been unobserved, and the French began to crowd down to the defence of the position. With a loud cheer Moncrieff and his party quitted their cover, and pushed forward to the bridge, under a heavy fire of musketry from the windows of the village, and from the two guns in the old castle above. Their impetuous onset drove the French across the ravine, and they reached the village, where everything was in confusion, and no united attempt at resistance could be made. By this time Elphinstone's ammunition was almost exhausted,

and he was unable to take full advantage of his success; but before darkness set in the French had been driven from their last position, and were in full retreat; the last of their parties having been pursued by the British with bayonet and cutlass up the steep hill behind the village. The cannon, ammunition, horses, and two stands of colours of the French were captured. Elphinstone's loss was Captain Douglas of the 11th Regiment, and three Spaniards killed, and twelve British and two Spaniards wounded. Mr James, in his 'Naval History,' says that "the success of Captain Elphinstone in this affair gained him many compliments on his knowledge of military tactics, so little expected in an officer of the navy." He had, however, already served a good apprenticeship to soldiering, with Sir Henry Clinton at the siege of Charlestown. On this occasion the skilful manner in which he ordered the attack of his small force, his care of his men, as evidenced by the insignificant loss on the side of the British and Spaniards, and the gallant way in which the bridge and heights of Ollioules were carried, clearly showed that he had profited by his previous experience in "long-shore" fighting. But for this action there can be no doubt that the French would have surrounded Toulon in the beginning of September, and that the evacuation of the port would have been precipitated by at least two months.

Leaving a body of Spaniards to garrison Ollioules,

Elphinstone returned to La Malgue, and began keeping up a sharp patrol of the environs of the town. As commandant of La Malgue, the responsibility mainly devolved upon him of preventing the army of Italy, under General Lapoype, which now began to appear in the vicinity, from effecting a junction with the forces of Carteaux.

On September 6th Lord Mulgrave arrived, and, at Lord Hood's request, took the command on shore. All the important positions round Toulon were occupied, and the energies of the small force of defenders were severely taxed by the arduous duty which they had to discharge. At the time of Lord Mulgrave's arrival, the force on shore did not exceed 1360 men, Lord Hood having had to recall a number of the sailors who had been at first landed. With this handful of men a line of fifteen miles had to be closely watched, and at times defended; and by the middle of September the French were pressing the British posts hard on every side. At La Malgue, Elphinstone, while harassed by menaces from detachments of the French army of Italy, had at the same time to keep in check the Republican sailors in Toulon, who, 5000 in number, were constantly intriguing against the British authority, and endeavouring to stir up the people in favour of the Republic. So troublesome did these men become, that Lord Hood determined to send them away; and five vessels were appointed to take them to other French ports, with

passports to protect them, in the event of their falling in with any English ships of war.

The deputies with Carteaux became more pressing for the recapture of Toulon. Carteaux himself, with 5000 troops and a strong force of artillery, succeeded in passing the gorge of Ollioules early in September, driving in the Spanish outpost which Elphinstone had left to guard it, and the environs of Toulon were now left exposed to the enemy on the side of the mainland. The French vedettes were speedily pushed forward to the outskirts of the town; and from the eastward General Lapoype's forces began to make desperate efforts to seize upon some position which would enable them to command the harbour. On 18th and 19th September the French began to open masked batteries near the north-west corner of the harbour, where there were two powder-magazines, and in close proximity to the fort of Malbousquet, which formed the chief defence to the westward of the city; and although a steady fire was maintained upon them from the fleet, they were only driven away for a time, to return again and take up stronger positions.

On the 24th September Lord Hood received a Neapolitan reinforcement, of 2000 troops and six vessels, under Marshal Forteguerri, and a smaller contingent of 1150 from the Sardinian army; but the new arrival, far from strengthening the Admiral's hands, only added to the difficulties which he already

experienced from the obstinacy and pretensions of the allied commanders. The impatience with which the Republic awaited the reduction of Toulon found its usual expression in a quick succession of changes in the command of the operations. Doppet, who had distinguished himself at Lyons, replaced Carteaux, only to be himself almost immediately superseded by Dugommier. Dugommier's commandant of artillery, Major Buonaparte, whose name was now for the first time to become known outside France, was indefatigable in tracing lines and training guns, and had a plan of his own for getting rid of the invaders, very different from the cut-and-dry instructions which the deputies who had come to be present at the siege had brought with them from Paris.

On the night of the 30th September the French succeeded in establishing themselves on Mont Faron, a ridge 1700 feet high to the north-west of the town, driving off the Spaniards, to whom unfortunately its defence had been intrusted. On the next day Lord Mulgrave, with Elphinstone and Admiral Gravina, attacked the French position, which the latter had already begun to fortify, and although the numbers of the enemy were greatly superior, drove them from the heights with heavy slaughter, the loss being estimated at three-fourths of their entire number.

Several daring attempts were made during the month of October by small sorties to capture Major Buonaparte's breaching guns, which he kept so sedu-

lously training on our positions. On the night of the 8th, the batteries on Hauteur de Reinier and the Haut des Moulins were captured, with considerable loss to the French; and the following night Captain Brunton in a sortie drove the French from their most advanced positions, and took several of their guns, which he could not, however, bring away with him. But the British from their small numbers were unable to hold the positions they had won; and the French speedily reappeared, in stronger force than before.

On 15th October, detachments from the army of Italy succeeded in establishing themselves on Cape le Brun, and occupying a fort a short distance to the south-east of La Malgue, from which they could command the entrance to the outer harbour, and were within reach of Lord Hood's vessels; but Elphinstone from La Malgue speedily made the place untenable for them. The British, however, were now shut in on all sides by forces sufficiently superior to overwhelm them, and officers and men were worn out by fighting and outpost duty. The Spaniards, too, were evincing those special characteristics which made them so unserviceable as allies in the Peninsular war. Their Admiral pretended to resent Lord Hood's exercise of authority, and showed himself intractable both in council and in the defence. Reinforcements became absolutely necessary if the Allies were to hold out; but before these could arrive, the French had hemmed

in the town and the British positions so closely that only a powerful army could have driven them from the promontory. Throughout the month of November the combined forces maintained their ground, though all their available resources were taxed to the uttermost in the effort. They had two strong positions, Elphinstone's fort of La Malgue, and Fort Eguillette on a point of land on the other side of the harbour, which Lord Hood had caused to be strongly fortified. The refugees from Marseilles and other ports of Provence had laboured so zealously on the fortifications at the latter position, that it soon presented a formidable appearance to the enemy, and was known by the name of the "Little Gibraltar." Buonaparte's idea was to get hold of Fort Eguillette, rather than risk an attack on the town. Eguillette could sweep with its guns both the harbour and the roadstead, "and if you can only drive away the ships, the troops will not remain," he argued. This did not square with Dugommier's instructions from the Executive at Paris, but he could not help recognising the value of his subordinate's counsel.

Throughout the month of October the energies of the small British force defending the town were put to a severe strain by the attempts of the French, which were, however, rather incessant than desperate. Upon Elphinstone, as commandant of La Malgue, the responsibility rested of preventing a junction between Lapoype and Dugommier; and as the for-

mer had his troops posted all round the eastward environs of La Malgue, a constant watch had to be kept upon his advanced posts, and the fort held in readiness for an attack. The British troops about Toulon at this time were far too few in number for the defence; and the behaviour of the Spaniards was such as to destroy all confidence in their working heartily with our officers. Admiral Langara, who had demanded that a Spanish officer should be appointed to the chief command, on being refused, laid his flag-ship and other two vessels alongside the Victory, and endeavoured to bully the Admiral into granting his request. Lord Hood, however, was not to be shaken in this way; and we can easily believe that nothing but the vital necessity of preserving harmony among the defenders prevented him from giving the Don a lesson in manners.

On October 22d Major-Generals O'Hara and Dundas arrived from Gibraltar, but with only half the force that Lord Hood had demanded; the governor of Gibraltar being able only to spare 750 men for Toulon. The former took command of the town and the forces; and immediately began to make efforts to drive back the French from their advanced positions, and if possible to clear them out of the peninsula. This, however, was not an easy task; for he had altogether at this time not more 12,000 effective troops to act with, against a force of at

least 30,000 Frenchmen, well supplied with ammunition and artillery.

By the end of November Buonaparte had placed a battery close to Fort Malbousquet, the strongest defence of the town to the westward, and was sleeping every night by the side of his guns. He had effected this with such caution and celerity that the first intimation Malbousquet received of his movements was when, early one morning, the battery opened its fire. General O'Hara had just taken command of Malbousquet, and he resolved to get rid of this new danger. On 30th November a general sortie from the town and forts was arranged against the heights of Arrennes; while another force was to endeavour to recapture the gorge of Ollioules, the loss of which had been the commencement of trouble to the besieged. The latter attacked Dugommier so desperately at the first onset that his troops gave way, and the batteries on the heights and the park of artillery were already in their hands; but they carried the pursuit too far, and Dugommier, taking advantage of their broken order, rallied his men and charged the pursuers, driving them back in the direction of the town. The attack on the Arrennes met with similar fortune. The French posts were quickly forced, and the battery carried; the British had already begun to spike the guns, when Buonaparte, advancing with a battalion along a trench, poured a sudden volley into their midst. So quickly was this

effected, that O'Hara at first thought the fire must have come from his own troops; and while advancing to satisfy himself whence was this new attack, he was wounded and made prisoner; while the English, finding themselves overpowered by numbers, were compelled reluctantly to fall back.

The month of December opened very gloomily for the defenders at Toulon. Lord Hood had learned that promised assistance from Austria was not to arrive, and he knew that he could expect no more reinforcements from home. The town itself grew more and more difficult to keep in check, for the Republicans became elated, and the Royalists disheartened, as the French forces began to draw closer and closer round the town. Buonaparte was now bombarding Fort Eguillette, and breaching its fortifications with 24-pounders; and it was obvious to all that if that position was lost, the situation of the troops on shore would be untenable. On 17th December, at 2 A.M., a desperate attack was made on Eguillette, in the midst of a violent storm, and the fort, greatly shattered by two days' incessant cannonading, was carried by the Republicans, although not without a desperate struggle, 300 British falling in the defence. Had the Spaniards who were posted on the outworks behaved with the same intrepidity, the assault could scarcely have succeeded. Another attack at the same time was made by General Lapoype on the Allies' position on Mont

Faron, which was also successful on the northern side, where the besieged had trusted to the inaccessible character of the mountain to shield them from attack; but the redoubts on the eastern heights, aided by Elphinstone from La Malgue, drove off their assailants. The French, however, planted on the higher eminences, placed these remaining posts greatly at a disadvantage.

When day broke on the 17th December, and Lord Hood saw the desperate situation—the flag of the Republic flying from Fort Eguillette—the French batteries crowning the heights of Faron, and their forces massing about Cape Brun,—he felt that a desperate effort must immediately be made to retrieve the fortune of the Allies, or that they must retire from the town without further delay. A council of war was at once called. His proposal to direct a combined attack by sea and land against Fort Eguillette met with no support from his officers; and it was resolved to evacuate the town. The difficulty of retiring was increased by reluctance to leave the Royalist population to the tender mercies of the Republicans, to be either massacred by the French as soon as they entered the town, or to be guillotined, fusiladed, or noyaded, like the victims at Lyons and Marseilles. In the afternoon orders were given to prepare for evacuating the forts on shore, and for embarking the men; and the British ships at once weighed anchor, and removed to the mouth of the

outer harbour. The outposts were called in and embarked, but a panic among the Neapolitans, and the stubbornness of the Spanish Admiral Langara, who insisted on taking an independent course of action, threw the plan of evacuation into confusion and disorder. The arsenal was rifled of all the ammunition that the English ships could carry away, and a portion of the French fleet was manned and made ready for sea, under the orders of the Royalist Admiral Trogoff. It was night before Elphinstone, having spiked the guns, and dismantled the works of La Malgue as much as the briefness of the time permitted, struck the British flag, and led his garrison down to the harbour, their road lighted up by the flames of the arsenal and the quarter adjoining, and by the watch-fires of the French on the heights behind. But his task was not ended when he had embarked his men. The miserable Toulonese had crowded down to the harbour, their ranks swelled by Royalists from all parts of Provence, who had taken shelter in the town; and their cries of despair and appeals for protection made the departure of the British an indescribably painful scene. The embarkation of the troops, and the taking off of all those Royalists who were most likely to fall victims to the Republican fury, were committed to the charge of Captain Elphinstone; while Sir Sidney Smith, who had joined Lord Hood as a volunteer, was intrusted with the work of firing the arsenal and dock-

yard, and destroying the remainder of the French fleet.

As Elphinstone conducted his boats, crowded with terror-stricken refugees, late at night, to the fleet in the outer harbour, the scene around was one of appalling grandeur. The flames from the arsenal and dockyard lit up not only the roads but the surrounding country; and the musters of the enemy, impatient to fall upon the town, could be seen on every side, while their shouts and songs mingled strangely with the cries of despair from the doomed Toulonese. The cannon from Fort Eguillette was sweeping the harbour, but Elphinstone passed safely under its fire. The French fleet were already burning in the inner roadstead — fifteen ships of the line and eight frigates—and every few minutes shells and powder-magazines were bursting with terrible explosion. Just as Elphinstone was putting off from shore, the Iris, 32-gun vessel, with a large quantity of powder, blew up; and shortly after the Montreal, a fire-ship, shared the same fate. He succeeded, however, in steering his flotilla safely through the numerous dangers that beset his course, and put his troops and the refugees whom he had brought off on board the fleet, without losing a man. Sir Sidney Smith, who had also shared the last dangers of the retreat, had also exerted himself to take off all the Toulonese who wished protection on board ship; and the number, who, by the

humane efforts of these two officers, were provided with shelter in the combined fleet, is returned at 14,875. The number received by Elphinstone on board his own ship, the Robust, was 3000. The French historians, and M. Thiers among them, have striven to fix a charge of inhumanity against the British in abandoning their Royalist allies, and have credited Admiral Langara with protecting the refugees. It was of course impossible, in the confusion prevailing on shore, to embark all the Toulonese who were disposed to fly; but the successful efforts of Elphinstone and Sir Sidney Smith, considering the limited amount of transport at their disposal, and the hurry in which the evacuation had to be effected, sufficiently vindicated the honour and humanity of the British character.

Elphinstone's services in the Toulon expedition were warmly acknowledged by the Admiral. In an official letter to the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, dated "On board the Victory, Dec. 20th," the day after the evacuation had been effected, Lord Hood writes: "It is my duty to acquaint you that I have been obliged to evacuate Toulon, and to retire from the harbour. It became unavoidably necessary that the retreat should not be deferred, as the enemy commanded the town and ships by their shot and shells. I therefore, agreeable to the governor's plan, directed the boats of the fleet to assemble by 11 o'clock, off near Fort La Malgue, and am happy to say the

whole of the troops were brought off, to the number of near 8000, without the loss of a man; and in the execution of this service I have infinite pleasure in acknowledging my very great obligations to Captain Elphinstone for his unremitting zeal and exertions, who saw the last man off; and it is a very comfortable satisfaction to me that several thousands of the meritorious inhabitants of Toulon were sheltered in his Majesty's ships."

Major-General David Dundas, who, after the capture of O'Hara, took command of the forces on land, writes thus in his despatches: "Captains Elphinstone, Hallowell, and Mathews superintended; and to their indefatigable attention and good dispositions we are indebted for the happy success of so important an operation. Captain Elphinstone, the governor of Fort La Malgue, has ably afforded the most essential assistance, in his command and management of the several important posts included in that district. It is impossible for me to express but in general terms the approbation that is due to the conduct and merits of the several commanding officers, and indeed of every officer in every rank and situation. . . . Troops have seldom experienced for so long a time a service more harassing, distressing, and severe; and the officers and men of the regiments and marines have gone through it with that exertion, spirit, and goodwill which peculiarly distinguish the British soldier. . . . The general service has

been carried on with the most perfect harmony and zeal by the navy and army. From our deficiency in artillerymen, many of our batteries were worked by seamen; they in part guarded some of our posts, and their aids were peculiarly useful in duties of fatigue and labour. In all these we found the influence of the superior activity and exertions of the British sailors."

Thus ended the Toulon expedition, an undertaking which from the outset was more adventurous than prudent, and which had been dictated by the chivalrous spirit which Pitt infused into British policy in the earlier stages of the war with France, rather than by any serious hopes of turning the tide of revolution in the south of France. The expedition, however, had the effect of completely crippling France by sea for a time; and though Lord Hood had to retire, he had the satisfaction of thinking that the British flag was borne out of Toulon harbour without dishonour. To the biographer of Elphinstone the chief interest in the Toulon expedition arises from the influence which it had on the careers of two of the prominent officers engaged. If Major Buonaparte on his side founded his fortunes by the capture of Toulon, Elphinstone was hailed by his countrymen as the hero of the defence. He had won the pass of Ollioules, in the most dashing action during the expedition; he had held the Fort of La Malgue throughout the whole occupation; above all, he had

prevented the junction of Lapoype with the other army, and had held the force from Italy at bay from October until the British retired; and he had conducted the evacuation in a manner that was considered to have redeemed at least a portion of its mortification. To Elphinstone in his way, as well as to Napoleon, Toulon was destined to be a turning-point in career; and the two were fated to meet afterwards, under circumstances that connect their names inseparably in history.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAPE EXPEDITION.

1795.

SERVICES connected with the breaking up of the expedition and the dispersion of the allied troops who had taken part in it, detained Elphinstone in the Mediterranean until the following February, when he was able to return to England, to receive the honours which the Government considered due to him for his gallant conduct at Toulon. Although the undertaking had fallen short of its main object —the promotion of a Royalist reaction in the south of France, and the keeping possession of the great Mediterranean arsenal of the Republic—it had still been successful, in that it had destroyed the naval power of France, and that the conduct of both the fleet and the troops had shown the Republicans in a very impressive manner the bravery and determination of the nation which they had provoked into war.

Of the distinctions granted for the Toulon expedition Elphinstone received an honourable share. He

was invested with the Order of the Bath soon after, and on 12th April 1794 was gazetted Rear-Admiral of the Blue, a step followed by his promotion to Rear-Admiral of the White on 4th July of the same year. He had not the good fortune to share in Lord Howe's glorious battle of the 1st of June of that year; but after the return of the victorious Channel fleet, he hoisted his flag on board the Barfleur, 98 guns, from which Collingwood, who had been its captain in Lord Howe's action, had just been removed to the Hector.

Elphinstone saw no active service while in the Channel fleet during the remainder of 1794, and indeed was much at the Admiralty, where he was consulted by Dundas upon operations in the Indian seas, which the progress of the Revolution on the Continent, and the danger of French intrigue in the East, rendered it necessary to attempt. Elphinstone's old experiences under the Indian Company's flag enabled him to speak with authority on this subject; and young as he had been when he had voyaged to India and China, his letters to the Secretary show that he had fully mastered the positions and policies of the various European colonies in the Eastern seas. Although belonging to different sides of politics, Dundas and Elphinstone were both of one mind about the necessity for prosecuting a vigorous war with France; and the Secretary was greatly influenced in the plan which was drawn up for an

expedition against the French and Dutch colonies in the Indian Ocean, by the Admiral's counsel and suggestions.

The conquest of Holland by the French, during the winter of 1795, had brought the Dutch naval power under the influence of the Republic; and scattered as the colonies of Holland then were over the world, it became an object to the British Government to reduce them, in the interests of its own naval supremacy. The Dutch East India Company, too, was tottering, partly from the natural effects of its colonial misgovernment, and partly from the critical circumstances of the mother country, and the financial pressure which the French invaders speedily put upon the moneyed institutions of Holland. The Stadtholder, the Prince of Orange, had sought refuge in England; and early in the spring of 1795 the British Government resolved to undertake operations against the Dutch colonies in his name. There was a hope, which proved to be fallacious, that the colonists would gladly receive the British as the allies of their prince, and accept deliverance from the grinding rule of the Dutch East India Company; and a preliminary effort was to be made by friendly suasion, failing which, force was to be used, to secure, in the first instance, the Cape of Good Hope.

Sir George Keith Elphinstone was selected for this duty, and a commission issued to him as Commander-

in-Chief in all the Indian seas. During the month of March he was busily engaged in preparing the details of the expedition, and was in constant consultation with Mr Dundas. A squadron, under Commodore Blankett, with troops commanded by Major-General Craig on board, was to precede the Admiral and rendezvous with him off the Cape; while Elphinstone himself was to follow in the Monarch, 74, on which he had hoisted his flag in the end of March. He was furnished with a royal proclamation to the colonists at the Cape, as well as a letter from the Stadtholder to the Government, which it was hoped would secure a peaceful welcome to the British fleet; and he was intrusted with full powers, either to fight or treat, as circumstances might require. Elphinstone, before sailing, had made himself thorough master of affairs at the Cape; and he saw that the interests of the colonists were so strongly bound up in the Dutch Company's rule, that it would be necessary to guarantee that they should not suffer by its extinction. In particular, it would be essential that the Dutch Company's paper, representing a loan of £20,000 raised at the Cape, should be guaranteed, as a means of removing interested objections to the overthrow of the Company's power.

Perhaps at no other period in his life was Elphinstone's natural capacity as a commander so strikingly manifested as in the organisation of this expedition.

The confidence of Dundas committed all details to his care; and in the brief time allotted for preparation —scarcely more than a month—he had arranged not merely the naval details of the fleet, and provided for the dangers of a winter campaign off the Cape of Storms, but he had made arrangements with the East India Company, with the Governor-General at Calcutta, and the Governors of Madras and Bombay, and with the Portuguese Governors of Goa and San Salvador, for co-operating in the various objects of the expedition. The winter storms at the Cape made it specially unsuitable as a rendezvous, and he fixed upon San Salvador as a port where the fleet could unite with the Indian contingent that was expected under Sir Alured Clarke, and whence the combined forces could make a descent upon the Cape, in case the inhabitants were disposed to dispute the objects of his Britannic Majesty. In the meantime Elphinstone's first duty was to proceed to the Cape, and ascertain the dispositions of the Government and the colonists.

The Admiral sailed, on 4th April 1795, from Spithead in the Monarch, commanded by his kinsman Captain John Elphinstone, accompanied by the Arrogant, 74, Captain Lucas; the Victorious, 74, Captain Browne; the Sphinx, 24, Captain Brisac; and the Rattlesnake, 16, Commander Spranger; and Arniston, East Indiaman. The vessels, as Elphinstone had complained before sailing, were lumbering; and

when he reached St Helena, he found that Blankett's squadron, after waiting the prescribed time, had gone on to the Cape. Sir George, after a protracted voyage, arrived off the Cape on 10th June, and found Commodore Blankett, with the America, Ruby, Stately, and Echo sloop, but the rough weather had prevented them from holding any communication with the shore; and the combined fleet made for Simon's Bay, and anchored there on the 12th.

If any hopes had been entertained that the colonists would peaceably put themselves under the protection of Great Britain until the restoration of peace, Sir George Elphinstone and General Craig had reason to be disappointed at their reception. But they were quite prepared to encounter resistance. Their course of duty was, however, prescribed by their instructions; and they were, besides, not in a condition to act with effect against the Dutch, until the arrival of Sir Alured Clarke and his troops. Commissary Sluysken, who then administered the government, and the "Raad Politique" or Council, were thrown into perplexity by Elphinstone's despatches and proclamations, and started every possible objection that could be urged against returning the immediate answer which he required. They had no instructions from the home government, and the Prince of Orange's letter was ambiguous, they pleaded; but their real object was to gain time, in order that a French or Dutch fleet might come to their rescue. The

colonists, too, though heartily tired of the Dutch government, had become pervaded with republican opinions, and would have preferred ruling themselves to accepting the government of Great Britain, even as a temporary necessity. Hopes had been entertained that some of the officers would declare for the British alliance, particularly Colonel Gordon, an old Scots-Dutch officer in high command at Cape Town; but here also was disappointment, for though several of them opened negotations with Sir George, they were all restrained from taking any step that could be accounted as desertion of their colours. Captain Dekker, the senior Dutch naval officer at the Cape, came on board the Monarch on 13th June, and had an interview with the Admiral and General Craig, which may be mentioned as a sample of the policy followed by the Dutch officers. Sir George showed him the Prince of Orange's letter, and Captain Dekker, who was "much affected," said "he was a man of fortune, who had lost all save his honour. He would never desert his Prince; but he must go and consult the Governor, and would give an answer in writing. He found he would have trouble, as all the troops were ordered to Simon's Bay." Elphinstone replied, "The situation of your country is truly lamentable, and I feel for you. Your line of conduct seems clear. Consider the liberal offers of the King; make them known to your officers and men, and if any are dis-

inclined I will remove them; and in the meantime I shall await your answer." Dekker, although loyal to the Stadtholder, was still oppressed by his obligations to the *de facto* government. And Sir George so sympathised with the scruples of a gallant officer that he permitted him to depart for Batavia, although he censures himself in his despatch to the Admiralty for having done what he is conscious might be construed as an act of weakness.

While Governor Sluysken and the Raad were thus keeping him in play, Elphinstone wrote to Dundas on 17th June: "Notwithstanding my endeavours to procure some decision or satisfactory intelligence of the various interests, all differing in their nature, and of the parties which prevail, it is not likely that any determination will be immediately formed on shore. The greatest difficulty seems to be the paper money in circulation here, amounting to 2,000,000 rix-dollars, which is the only payment, and of which many of the first men have a considerable stock. A second idea has prevailed for some time that Holland was on the eve of making peace with France, at the price of a declaration of war against England. This occasions a reluctance to declare one way or the other, until something further is heard of the state of Europe. A third objection is that the monopolies are in the hands of the Council — an advantage they would hesitate extremely to resign, or to adopt any measure which might hazard the loss of it. At the same time

it is a powerful engine with the people, who sensibly feel the oppression of such a practice. . . . I have met with nothing but chicane and duplicity, even where I least expected it, and our present situation renders it necessary to temporise."

Elphinstone's envoys reported Commissary Sluysken to be "a cold and undecided person," but he had evidently made up his mind not to surrender without fighting. The Dutch artillery and infantry at the Cape numbered over 1000 men, and the Council speedily added to these 3000 burghers and native militia, among which there was an excellent force of volunteer cavalry. Scurvy was ravaging the English, a fact of which the Dutch were aware; and the utmost effective force that the former could land did not exceed 1800 men. With these they would have readily risked an engagement; but they had no means of following up a success, through want of transport and shortness of provisions. They had neither engineers nor intrenching tools, and it was hopeless to think of laying siege to Cape Town until the arrival of General Clarke provided them with these necessaries. But the activity of the enemy, which increased in proportion as the British remained inactive, soon compelled the latter to take up an offensive position. While Elphinstone was endeavouring in vain, by proclamations, explanations, and letters, to enlighten the colonists as to the real objects of his

mission, the Dutch began to show themselves in force in the vicinity of Simon's Bay. On the 19th June all their troops and the male population withdrew from Simon's Town, where the British had many sick in hospital, and fears were entertained that the place would be burned. This desertion had a prejudicial effect upon the supplies, and on 1st July the Admiral was compelled to put the squadron on two-thirds allowance. The situation was growing desperate, and after another ineffectual attempt had been made to influence the Governor, the Admiral instructed General Craig, on the 14th July, to land with the 78th Regiment and a force of marines, amounting altogether to only 800 men. The militia pickets pressed close round Craig's position, firing upon his patrols; but until the final answer of the authorities could be obtained, Elphinstone had given strict orders that the troops were to engage in no act of hostility. So active and daring were the colonists, that it became impossible to continue acting merely on the defensive; and after a consultation between Elphinstone and General Craig, it was resolved to assault the Dutch position at Muizenberg, which commanded the entry into the interior, and was the chief obstacle to the British officers being able to explain their mission to the colonists, who were misled by the Republican authorities. With the small force and the insufficient *matériel* at the command of the British, an attack on Muizenberg was a very formidable undertaking. The

fort presented a strong front to the sea, and had a steep mountain on its right, protected by a powerful battery of field-guns, which could only be answered by fire from the ships, and these could with difficulty approach on account of the shallow water. The Dutch position was covered behind and flanked by rugged rocky ridges, from which the keen-eyed colonial marksmen could harass the British as they advanced to the assault.

It was not until the 7th August that the wind served fair for an attack on Muizenberg by sea; but in the interval Elphinstone had secretly prepared a gunboat, and had armed the launches of the fleet with heavy carronades. He also sent on shore two battalions of seamen, numbering about 1000 men, under Captains Hardy of the Echo and Spranger of the Rattlesnake, and sent ships frequently round the bay, so that suspicion might be diverted when the proper moment for attack arrived. The best description that can be given of the spirited action which followed is to be found in Sir George's own words in his despatch to the Admiralty :—

"On the 7th instant a slight breeze sprang up from the north-west, and at twelve o'clock the preconcerted signal was made, when Major-General Craig, with his accustomed readiness and activity, instantly put the forces on shore in motion; and at the same moment Commodore Blankett, equally zealous, in the America, with the Stately, Echo, and Rattlesnake,

got under way, whilst the gunboats and armed launches preceded the march of the troops about 500 yards, to prevent their being interrupted. About one o'clock the ships, being abreast of an advanced post of two guns, fired a few shots, which induced those in charge to depart, and on approaching a second post of one gun, and a royal mortar or howitzer, the effect was the same. On proceeding off the camp, the confusion was instantly manifest, although the distance from the ships was greater than could have been wished, but the shallowness prevented a nearer approach.

"The Echo led, commanded by Lieutenant Tod of the Monarch, and anchored in 2½ fathoms, followed by the America, which anchored in 4½; then the Stately and Rattlesnake, which anchored nearer, in proportion to their lesser draughts of water, off the enemy's works, which began to fire, and the fire was returned by the sloops; but an increase of wind prevented the large ships from acting, until they had carried out heavy anchors. This duty was performed by the commanders with great coolness, much to their own honour and the country's credit.

"In a few minutes after the fire opened, which obliged the Dutch to abandon their camp with the utmost precipitation, taking with them only two field-pieces; and at four o'clock the Major-General took possession of it, after a fatiguing march over heavy sandy ground. To him I beg leave to refer for the

particulars of what was taken therein, as the sea ran so high that no person from the ships or gunboats could venture to land.

"In transmitting you the proceedings of the fleet under my command, I shall at all times feel great satisfaction in doing justice to the merits of the several officers. To their judgment and good conduct in the present instance is to be attributed the immediate success which attended the attempt; and it is therefore my duty to recommend to his Majesty's notice Commodore Blankett, Captain Douglas, Lieutenant Tod of the Monarch, commanding the Echo, and Lieutenant Ramage, also of the Monarch, commanding the Rattlesnake, and Mr Charles Adam, of the Monarch, midshipman, who commanded the gunboat. I am sensibly obliged to each of them individually for his steady and correct discharge of my orders. I must further beg leave to add, that it was universally agreed that the Echo's fire was superiorly directed and ably kept up; and particular acknowledgments are also due to the officers and men for the general zeal and activity which appeared in every countenance, of which I was enabled to judge with more precision, as the Commodore obligingly permitted me to accompany him, and to visit the other ships employed under his directions upon this service."

This is the only allusion which the Admiral makes to his own share in the action; but his presence on

the deck of the America, and his encouragement to the men under the hottest of the fire, did much to stimulate the briskness of the attack. The incident forms the subject of a spirited painting in the possession of Lord Keith's family, which we have been permitted to reproduce on the opposite page.

While the ships were thus engaged, Major Moneypenney of the 78th attacked the rocky ridge beyond the camp, under a steady fire from the burghers, and shots from a battery beyond the lagoon between the fort and Cape Town. The Dutch company's colours and a red flag of the Republic were captured. The Dutch made a desperate defence; and in spite of the gallantry of the light company of the 78th, it was only after fighting the whole afternoon that the British succeeded in clearing the heights. Among the colonists Captain Cloete, a member of a family that has since earned great distinction in the British service, and a French volunteer named Duplessis, especially attracted the notice of the British officers by their desperate bravery, and the resolution with which they contested every step of our advance.

Next morning the Dutch turned out in force from Cape Town, and advanced to recapture Muizenberg; but the marines trained the guns which had been taken the previous day, against them, and they were obliged to retire after some skirmishing, in which their conduct received hearty praise from the General.

LORD KEITH AT MUIZENBERG

From a painting at Saltram House

On the 9th, ammunition and reinforcements, which had been anxiously expected from St Helena, arrived, and the British were able to strengthen their position on shore, which they had previously held by dint of sheer daring. General Craig, however, was still in no condition to follow up the Dutch beyond the reach of assistance from the ships. His force was small, he had no transport, the weather was uncertain; and the Admiral could not assist him by sending round ships to Table Bay, if he were to attack Cape Town, as it would have been impossible to anchor sufficiently close to be of service at that season. General Alured Clarke with further reinforcements was overdue, but there was no certainty of the date of his arrival; and Sir George was unable, as he had at first proposed, to go over to San Salvador and convoy him across. All that Elphinstone and the General could do was to hold their ground until Clarke's arrival; and even this was a task of serious difficulty, exposed as our positions on shore were to a constant risk of being attacked in force, and with the troops suffering from disease and the inclement Cape winter.

On 26th August, Colonel Mackenzie, with a party of the 78th, made a sortie to attack the Dutch outposts; but the colonists, by their superior knowledge of the country, succeeded in evading him, and it was with considerable peril that he regained the camp. The enemy in retaliation, on the night of 31st Au-

gust, made a daring attack on General Craig's camp, firing on it from the heights and driving in his pickets. In the skirmishing that ensued, Major Moneypenney of the 78th was severely wounded, along with several other officers; and the possibility of the British being able to hold their ground much longer became very doubtful. Next day a conference on the subject took place between Elphinstone and the General; and it was resolved to wait other six days for Sir Alured Clarke's arrival. If by that time the vessels expected from San Salvador did not turn up, Craig must either hazard giving battle to the Dutch, or retire to shipboard, as his provisions were all but exhausted, and his stock of ammunition running low. Under these depressing circumstances the high spirit of the Admiral was of the most essential service; and was gratefully acknowledged by his colleagues. Always a skilful administrator of naval stores, he now exerted himself to the utmost to husband the supply of provisions, and to keep the troops on shore victualled. In spite of the badness of the weather and the roughness of the sea, his boats were constantly employed in landing provisions and ammunition for the forces; and the seamen's allowances were doled out to all ranks with a sparing hand. But even economy has its limits of success, and the fortunes of the British expedition were at a very low ebb, when the India ships, with General Alured Clarke on board, sailed into False Bay, and

signalled to the Admiral on the afternoon of 3d September, just at the time when the whole strength of the Dutch disposable force, with 18 field-pieces, was advancing to the attack of Craig's camp. The sight of the signals, and the appearance of the convoy of fourteen vessels, which their scouts could make out from the heights, caused the Dutch to reconsider their intentions, and fall back to their former positions.

General Clarke entered Simon's Bay, and joined the Admiral on shore on the morning of the 4th. Elphinstone lost no time in placing before him the gravity of the situation, but the roughness of the weather rendered the disembarkation of the troops a slow and difficult proceeding. Craig and his 1900 men were still hemmed in in his camp at Muizenberg, the Dutch colonists showing that dogged and obstinate courage which they have continued to display down to our own times. It was not until 13th September that the fresh troops, with their guns, ammunition, and provisions — of which last the supply was still short — could be got up, and preparations made for moving forward; while the weather still made communication impossible with the three ships which had been sent round under Commodore Blankett to Table Bay. However, it was resolved to advance, and to drag forward the guns by soldiers and marines; and on the 14th the force set out, having left a sufficient protection to

guard the camp and stores at Muizenberg. The army advanced with skirmishers thrown out at both flanks to scatter the Dutch, who were hanging about on horseback, and firing on the troops from long ranges. The main body of the Dutch was posted at Wynberg, across the road to Cape Town, where they had strengthened their position by intrenchments and nine pieces of cannon. Before the British could reach Wynberg, the Dutch marksmen, although kept well aloof by the detachments on the flanks, had killed one seaman and wounded seventeen soldiers. General Clarke gave orders to attack them, forming the force from columns of march into two lines, while at the same time Commodore Blankett, in Table Bay, made a diversion in the rear of the enemy, and alarmed them for the safety of their communications with Cape Town. The Dutch scarcely waited for a few rounds from the British guns, and precipitately retreated, but darkness coming on prevented General Clarke from pursuing them over the marshy and broken ground. He accordingly halted for the night, and later in the evening a flag of truce was sent in by Commissary Sluysken, requesting an armistice of forty-eight hours, and offering to reopen the negotiations which Admiral Elphinstone had previously begun. The General would only grant twenty-four; before the expiry of which the Dutch expressed willingness to capitulate. After the resistance which the Dutch had offered,

it was not, however, within the power of the Admiral and General to give the colonists as favourable terms as they had at first been disposed to offer, and the garrison of Cape Town and the Dutch forces had to yield themselves prisoners of war; the forts and castle were given up to the English; and a parole of honour exacted from all officers who chose to leave the colony that they would not bear arms against Great Britain for the remainder of the war. On the 17th the standard of Great Britain was hoisted on shore, and was saluted by the batteries and ships of the squadron with 15 guns. The governor and officers of the Dutch East India Company had their personal property guaranteed to them, and were permitted to leave the Cape on 13th November following; while General Craig assumed the government in the name of King George III., and set to work to organise the administration. Thus an end was put to the government at the Cape of the Dutch East India Company, which had been established there for nearly a century and a half; and with the loss of the Cape commenced the decay of her colonial influence, which in the course of the next quarter of a century was to reduce Holland from her position as one of the great Powers of Europe to a state dependent for its individual existence mainly upon the good faith of treaties and the obligations of international law. The colonists, at all events, if

we may trust the historian of South Africa, had no cause to regret the change.[1]

Both General Alured Clarke and General Craig wrote in their despatches in the warmest terms of Elphinstone's services throughout the expedition. General Clarke writes on 21st September to Dundas: "My sense of the obligation I am under to Sir George Elphinstone is such as I should not do justice to in an attempt to express it; his advice, his active assistance, and cordial co-operation on every occasion, have never been wanting, and entitle him to my warmest gratitude." While Craig remarks that "the general character of Sir George Keith Elphinstone and his ardent desire to serve his country are too well known to receive additional lustre from anything I could say on that subject; but I should do injustice to my own feelings if I

[1] "Thus closed the *régime* of the great commercial association which for nearly a century and a half controlled the affairs of the Cape of Good Hope. A dozen private gentlemen at home, in a back parlour, around a green table, had ruled an empire abroad, commanding their ships of war, their fortresses, and troops; but although professing to promote the national advantage, they merely tolerated colonisation just so far as they could find an immediate benefit from it to their Eastern trade; and while themselves glorying in the privileges of republican citizenship, they only permitted, 'as a matter of grace,' any man to have a residence in the land of which they had taken possession in the name of the sovereign power.

"'Some national feeling in favour of the Fatherland may have lingered,' says the late Judge Watermeyer; 'but substantially every man in the colony, of every hue, was benefited when the incubus of the Dutch East India Company was removed.'"—Noble's 'History of South Africa,' p. 20.

did not express the obligations I am under for the ready co-operation and assistance that he afforded upon every occasion, which so eminently contributed to the successful issue of our joint endeavours." All accounts of the expedition confirm the belief that but for the resolution and activity of the Admiral, and his exertions to keep the troops on shore supplied with victuals and ammunition, General Craig must have retreated on shipboard before the arrival of the vessels from San Salvador. The acquisition of the Cape Colony was readily attributed to Elphinstone's ability and professional skill, both by the Court and the Admiralty; and Earl Spencer, who was then at the head of the navy, lost no time after the receipt of the Cape despatches, in sending the following private letter of congratulations to Sir George:—

"ADMIRALTY, *29th December* 1795.

"DEAR SIR,—I take the first opportunity which has offered since the receipt of your letter of the 23d September last to thank you for it, and to express my very sincere congratulations on the very valuable acquisition which you have obtained for this country at so little expense of lives or money; an acquisition which, if proper use is made of it, will prove, I am convinced, one of the most advantageous we have ever made.—I am, &c.,

"SPENCER."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAPTURE OF THE DUTCH FLEET.

1795–1796.

THE reduction of the Cape formed only a portion of the commission which Elphinstone had been sent out to the Indian seas to execute. Before his departure from England, Mr Dundas and he had been in frequent consultation regarding the affairs of India, and had given much consideration to the effects which the troubled condition of events in Europe might be expected to produce upon the policies of the Courts of Poona and Hyderabad; and as Elphinstone's early experiences in the East had given him a clear insight into the policies of the native powers, he was able to readily enter into Dundas's views. The Deccan was then swarming with French adventurers, anxious to stir up the minds of the native princes against the East India Company's government; and if French squadrons were to appear off the Indian coast, they would be able to give a mischievous impetus to the ele-

ments of disaffection. Mr Dundas was anxious that all the possessions in the Eastern seas, belonging to either the Dutch or the French, should be captured or blockaded, as well for the protection of the Company's trade as for the security of our Indian settlements; and Sir George took out with him full discretionary powers for engaging in any maritime operations against the French or Dutch that he found himself able to undertake, and for assisting the Indian governments, should war break out in Southern India, as seemed to be only too probable.

The dogged resistance of the Cape burghers, and the unavoidable delay in the arrival of General Clarke, had, however, prevented Sir George from entering the Indian Ocean until long beyond the time he had at first expected; and he had been obliged to delegate a portion of his powers to Rear-Admiral Rainier, who was then commanding on the Indian station. In the month of July, while Elphinstone was impatiently waiting for the decision of the Dutch Government at the Cape, Rainier had sailed with troops from Madras to Ceylon, to receive the surrender of Trincomalee and Fort Oostenburgh, which had been arranged with the Dutch Governor-General of the island; but the local commandant refused obedience to the orders of his superior to admit the English troops, and the forts of both Trincomalee and Oostenburgh had to be attacked before they surrendered. This was in the end of August,

before the Cape of Good Hope had as yet capitulated.

Elphinstone's health had been greatly impaired by overwork and anxiety during all these months at the Cape, and when the surrender of Cape Town left him free to continue his course for India, he was suffering so greatly that he wrote to the Admiralty, begging that a successor might be sent out and he be relieved of his command. But in spite of his indisposition, he had much hard work to get through before leaving the Cape. In conjunction with General Clarke, he superintended the formation of a government to replace that of the Dutch East India Company; arranged a Court of Justice, an Admiralty Court, and a Prize Court; was indefatigable in taking steps to conciliate the colonists, and reassure them as to the benevolent intentions of the King's Government; and at the same time wrote very full despatches by every packet, informing Ministers at home of the true situation of affairs in South Africa. In his letters to Mr Dundas, Elphinstone urged a conciliatory and enlightened policy towards the burghers, a liberal recognition of the losses which individuals had sustained by the change of Government, and the employment of natives of the colony in places of trust in the administration. The Ministers of the day were scarcely prepared to go so far as Elphinstone recommended, and were rather inclined to act upon the maxim "*væ victis;*"

but the policy which Sir George suggested in his letters to Mr Dundas has been accepted by a later generation as the one best befitting a great and civilised country. Elphinstone also made strenuous exertions to turn our new conquest into what he foresaw would be its greatest use to Britain — a naval station, where vessels passing to and from our Indian possessions might put in to victual and refit, and whence armaments might be fitted out in case of need for expeditions in the Indian seas. His order-book contains daily instructions for organising the stores necessary for a great victualling station, for regulating the harbour, and for establishing a complete code of signals between all the points commanding the coast and the harbour of Cape Town. Yet in the midst of indisposition and in the pressure of his own heavy duties, he could not resist projecting schemes for promoting the future material prosperity of the settlement. Among other proposals, he drew up a code of regulations for securing to the colonists the benefit of their own fisheries; and in particular for protecting their rights in the whale-fishery, which had previously been entirely in the hands of the Americans. He had, too, to be constantly on the watch lest misunderstanding or cause of offence should arise between the British and the burghers, and threaten the harmonious settlement of the government. A single instance of the jealousy of the Dutch will show how manifold must

have been Elphinstone's troubles at this time. The captain of one of the ships of war, who added to the acquirements of his profession a gift for expounding the Gospel, was rash enough to baptise a child in the house of Colonel de Lisle, who had commanded the fort of Muizenberg against us; and the Dutch, who had been guaranteed in the exercise of their religion, raised a tumult against what they regarded as an infringement of the Convention, and were with difficulty pacified, when Elphinstone suspended the too zealous officer from his command. On another occasion a chaplain of the fleet had obligingly joined a couple of colonists in marriage, ignorant that the groom was already a husband, and a clamour was again excited, which the Admiral had to quell by his personal interference. But whether in small matters or in great, Elphinstone was untiring in his efforts to lay the foundations of contentment among the inhabitants; and the order and satisfaction which prevailed at Cape Town until the colony was for a brief season restored to Holland at the Peace of Amiens, were greatly due to his administrative capacity and wise prevision.

It was not until November that arrangements were so far completed at the Cape as to enable Elphinstone and Sir Alured Clarke to hand over the government to General Craig, leaving Commodore Blankett in command of the naval station, with full orders

to act until the Admiral's return. A part of the fleet was despatched in advance, to cruise about the French ports in the Indian Ocean, and endeavour to cut off supplies for the Mauritius; and Elphinstone himself sailed in the Monarch, on 15th November, taking with him the Arrogant, Rattlesnake, and Echo, and the Prince of Wales transport, which had General Clarke and the troops that could be spared from the Cape on board. They also took with them a number of German recruits, whom they had enlisted at the Cape, as a double means of ridding the colony of dangerous characters and of strengthening the Company's army, which then stood in great need of Europeans. Nothing eventful happened on the voyage. News was received on the way that Trincomalee had at last capitulated, and that Malacca, as well as all the Dutch settlements on the continent of India, had already surrendered to Britain. The Monarch reached Madras roads on 15th January 1796.

Sir George did not find the situation on the Indian coast favourable for active service on a great scale. Admiral Rainier had been most zealous and successful in prosecuting conquests for the Company, but the result of his victories had been to break up the fleet, and to draw away large bodies of troops to guard the newly won possessions. Widely scattered as these were throughout the Eastern seas, it would have been impossible to get a strong fleet readily

together, except at the peril of losing lately made acquisitions, and Elphinstone put his views very clearly before Lord Hobart, the Governor. The Rear-Admiral was away at Malacca when Elphinstone arrived; ships were required in the Straits, and on the coast of Ceylon; there were French cruisers about the Malabar coast; and soon Elphinstone found himself left alone with the Monarch at Madras. The Company was anxious that an attempt should be made to reduce Batavia; but Elphinstone convinced Lord Hobart of the impolicy of attempting it at that time. There could be no question but that the fleet would be able to take the town; but, in the unsettled state of India, would the Company be able to sustain the drain of troops that would be necessary to hold it —a drain that would be all the more severe for the mortality which the pestilential climate of Java could not fail to occasion? Then, unless the Company was in a position to supplant the Dutch by a firm government of its own, there was a danger of the port becoming a scene of anarchy, and attracting lawless adventurers, who would be even more dangerous than the Dutch. Elphinstone was in favour of holding Batavia and the Mauritius in check, until the hands of the Company and the King's troops and vessels were more at liberty, rather than of immediately reducing them, at a risk of further embarrassment to the Government.

Elphinstone was much indisposed during his stay

at Madras. His eyes were so affected that he could not write, and his general health so bad that he took no part in the expedition against Colombo, which resulted in the surrender of that fort, and the conquest of the whole island of Ceylon, on 15th February. The Admiral also was apprehensive that he might be summoned at any moment to proceed to Bengal, where the Company's military officers were in open mutiny, at the interference with the illegal perquisites which they had hitherto been permitted to enjoy, and at the new regulations for their service which were about to come in force. The government in Bengal was brought face to face with such a crisis as had not been experienced since Clive had been brought thither from Madras nearly forty years before; and Sir John Shore, the Governor-General, was obliged to warn Elphinstone that his services might be required at any moment to aid in supporting authority at the presidency of Fort William. The Admiral had all his preparations made, and was ready to start for Calcutta, when an express arrived from the Governor-General, informing him that the difficulty had been arranged. Sir John Shore had not the decision of character necessary to deal vigorously with such an emergency, and the concessions with which he bribed the mutineers to return to their duty were so ample, that they themselves were surprised at the success of their demands; but the Governor-General's weakness so displeased

the Court of Directors, who had themselves shown equally little fortitude in the danger, that they ordered him to resign the government and return home.

While at Madras, Sir George contracted a friendship with a native prince, which was kept up, in spite of distance, throughout the greater part of their lives, by frequent letters and tokens of goodwill on both sides. Elphinstone, it has been mentioned, held an office in the Scottish household of the Prince of Wales; and when Lieutenant-Colonel Murray of the 84th Regiment brought out a picture of the Princess of Wales, as a gift from his Royal Highness, then recently married, to the Nawab of the Carnatic, whose alliance was at that time of much importance to the British, it became Elphinstone's duty to take the chief part in the presentation. An account of the ceremony, which was drawn up and forwarded to the Prince of Wales, has been preserved among Elphinstone's papers, and may be quoted here :—

"*Narrative of the ceremony observed on presenting the picture of H.R.H. the Princess of Wales to his Highness the Nabob of the Carnatic, at his public durbar, near Fort St George, on Tuesday, 23d February* 1796.

"On the day preceding the ceremony, Lieutenant-Colonel Murray announced his arrival to the Honourable Vice-Admiral Sir George Keith Elphinstone, one of the chief officers on the Prince of Wales's establishment, and re-

quested Sir George to introduce him to his Highness the Nabob, that he might have the honour of presenting the picture of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, with a letter from the Prince, with which he was charged to the Nabob of the Carnatic. The Admiral immediately wrote to the Nabob, to communicate the Lieutenant-Colonel's arrival and mission, and to request his Highness would name a time for his presenting him,—to which his Highness instantly replied, and appointed the following morning at 10 o'clock.

"The dawn of Tuesday opened with the firing of his Highness's guns, which proclaimed to the inhabitants the intention of some public ceremony or celebration; and at half-past 9 o'clock the procession commenced, consisting of the officers of H.M's ships, in several carriages, with the Admiral and Lieutenant-Colonel Murray in the first carriage, the picture and letter from their Royal Highnesses in the second; and proceeded to his Highness the Nabob's palace. They arrived at ten, and were received by his Highness's troops under arms, formed in two lines with martial music; elephants with howdahs, and all the magnificent display of Eastern grandeur, attended by numbers of admiring spectators. A nephew of the Nabob was in readiness when the carriages stopped at the palace gate, and conducted them to the inner court. The Nabob and his sons advanced, and met the Admiral on the avenue leading to the great chamber; and with the procession following them, entered the public *durbar*, a spacious saloon appropriated for state reception, when many hundreds of his Highness's court and attendants were collected, richly

adorned in white dresses, and forming together a most splendid and agreeable spectacle. The Admiral addressed his Highness in the following speech :—

"'It has long been the universal custom for princes and illustrious personages filling high and exalted stations of rank, in alliance and friendship, to communicate and perpetuate their personal esteem and regard by offering tokens and pledges of their attachment on memorable occasions, and particularly those whom distant residence deprives of more mutual intercourse. I have now the honour of waiting on your Highness, in consequence of the marriage of my Royal Master, the Prince of Wales, to his dignified relation, a Princess of the august house of Brunswick, of which your Highness has been previously informed. His Royal Highness has been pleased to intrust a picture of the Princess, with a letter from himself addressed to the Nabob, to Lieutenant-Colonel Murray, of his Majesty's 84th Regiment, an officer high in the estimation of the Prince, and whom I have the honour of presenting to your Highness, that he may be favoured with the opportunity of delivering the pledge of amity with which he is charged—an act of duty I most cheerfully undertake for the service of my gracious and beloved Master the Prince.

"'This mark of his Royal Highness's attention was intended for your renowned and respected father, his Highness the Nabob Wallahjah, late Nabob of the Carnatic, whose princely soul the Almighty has at length received into eternal bliss, after a serene, long, and happy life, and whose death has invested your Highness with the distinguished sover-

eignty, to continue a happiness to the subjects and inhabitants of your Highness's territory; and although Lieutenant-Colonel Murray's mission was directed to your illustrious sire, I have every reason to believe that his Royal Highness's friendly desire will not be less acceptable to your Highness, bearing in my memory the many affectionate expressions your Highness has been pleased at all times to use in the conferences I have been honoured with, when speaking of his Royal Highness, his family, person, and character, as well as from your sentiments of attachment and unalterable friendship towards the British nation.'

"This speech was interpreted by the Nawab's secretary, as well as the following reply returned by his Highness:—

"After compliments: 'Of the pledges of amity and friendships which I have hitherto had the honour to receive, none have affected or interested my feelings so nearly as the precious token of regard now presented to me: valuable certainly on account of the confirmation which it affords me of the personal esteem of one of the most accomplished Princes of the age, but invaluable from the representation it bears of the most exalted and most amiable Princess in the universe; and especially valuable when I reflect on the occasion that has produced this reassurance of friendship, not only in the happy union of hundred perfections, but in the effects which must result from it, in the securing and continuing of the happiness of a noble, brave, and generous nation.

"'The pledge, which I now hold, and ever shall retain in remembrance of the felicitous event which it is meant to perpetuate, is more dear to me, if possible, from the recol-

lection that it was originally intended for my revered father, the Nabob Wallahjah, as it flatters me that I am supposed to possess the like warm and glowing affections towards the British nation which my illustrious ancestor was well known to entertain; and if in his blissful state my honoured sire can look down and contemplate the scene now passing, I pray of his spirit to possess me, and enable me to inspire such sentiments as he himself could not have failed to enkindle on an occasion so animating. Express my sincere and unbounded affection and attachment to the illustrious and august family which gives splendour to the throne of the British empire, and to the happy people who enjoy the blessings of a mild and moderate rule. And as it has pleased Divine Providence to place me over a large and prosperous people, I trust that, by the daily contemplation of the many virtues which possess the British throne, I shall study to increase their happiness and their numbers. I am highly sensible of the attention shown to me by his Royal Highness, in commissioning Lieutenant-Colonel Murray, an officer so favourably regarded by his Royal Highness, to convey the picture of the Princess to my hands, and it comes additionally recommended to me from the introduction of Sir George Keith Elphinstone, holding most deservedly a near and confidential situation in the civil establishment of his Royal Highness, and filling with so much conduct and gallantry a high and important military office in the service of his most gracious and illustrious sovereign, and discharging his relative situations with so much dignity to his Prince, with so much honour to his King, and with so much advantage to his country."

Elphinstone's acquaintance with the Nawab soon ripened into friendship, and the latter placed much reliance on the frank and kindly Admiral; and for years after Sir George had returned to Europe, the Nawab continued to confide in him, and seek for sympathy in his troubles.

In the month of March the idea of an expedition to Batavia was revived, and Elphinstone was just beginning to make his preparations when an express from Britain with important news recalled him to the Cape. Shortly after the beginning of the year the British Government were informed that a fleet was being prepared in the Texel, and secret information pointed towards a combined French and Dutch expedition in the direction of the Cape and the Indian seas. Elphinstone was under little apprehensions about the recapture of the Cape, feeling certain that the task would be even more difficult than he himself had found it to be; and he was strongly of opinion that the Mauritius and the Isle of France would be the first objects of the enemy. However, he determined to endeavour to waylay the vessels at the Cape, and sailed from Madras on the 24th March, arriving at Simon's Bay on 23d May. Here he found no news of the enemy, but was gratified at the advance which the new colony had made during his six months' absence. His health had much improved during the voyage to the Cape, and anxious as he was to return to

Europe, he was even more eager to have an opportunity of beating the enemy before the relief from his command, which he was now expecting, should arrive.

The Dutch fleet, however, seemed to sail with the national deliberation. It had slipped out of the Texel on the morning of February 23d, eleven sail altogether, and had given chase to the Glatton, 54, just before entering the Channel. The Admiralty despatched the corvette La Moselle, one of the French vessels that had been captured at Toulon, to warn Elphinstone to be prepared. The Admiral was on the alert; and when news reached him that the Dutch squadron had been seen off Saldanha Bay on 2d August, he weighed anchor, and immediately sailed to attack them. This was on the 5th; but unfortunately the weather was so stormy and the sea running so high in Simon's Bay, that Elphinstone's flag-ship, the Monarch, lost its mainmast, and it was not until next day that the squadron could sail. His information had led him to believe that the Dutch fleet had continued to hold a southerly course; and Elphinstone, misled by some strange sails that had been seen off False Bay, sailed to the south and westward through a tempestuous gale, which damaged several of his ships, and rendered navigation peculiarly hazardous. In spite of the storm, the Stately, with the Rattlesnake and Echo sloops, made their

way out of Table Bay and joined the Admiral, but without being able to give him any news of the enemy, as the rough weather had broken off communication along the coast. After having beat about in quest of the Dutch for the best part of a week, Elphinstone returned to his anchorage at Simon's Bay on the 12th, where he found intelligence waiting him that the whole of the enemy's squadron had dropped anchor in Saldanha Bay. The weather was blowing a hurricane, and though Elphinstone would fain have at once put out to sea, it was impossible to get clear of the bay, from the violence of the storm; and several of his vessels had been seriously shattered before they found anchorage. Chafing with impatience lest his prey should escape, Sir George wrote thus to General Craig on the 13th: "I received all your letters at last; how unfortunate nothing reached me at sea! A series of the most wretched weather has disabled most of the ships, and detains me here with a wind favourable for the enemy's departure from the other bay. If, however, I am ever to be in luck—you know marine affairs will not admit of delay—I shall begin directly, unless their position requires more caution than I expected. But I fear the information they will get from Mr Vanrennan's man will induce them to depart. I thank you for the details of your proceedings, and, as far as I can judge, do not see they could be better managed. The Tre-

mendous is in a dangerous situation; and the Trident beat upon a rock in the middle of the bay. The Crescent ran wantonly on shore, as did the Commodore on board this ship at sea in a gale of wind. May better luck attend us, is the true wish of, truly yours, G. K. E."

It was not until the 15th that the storm subsided, and the Admiral was able to get out to sea, with the following ships under his command:—

Ships.	Guns.	Men.	Commanders.
Monarch, .	74	612	Vice-Admiral the Hon. Sir G. K. Elphinstone, K.B. Captain John Elphinstone.
Tremendous, .	74	590	Rear-Admiral Pringle. Captain John Aylmer.
America, . .	64	491	Commodore John Blankett.
Stately, . .	64	491	Captain Billy Douglas.
Ruby, . .	64	491	„ Jacob Waller.
Sceptre, . .	64	491	„ W. Essington.
Trident, . .	64	491	„ E. D. Osborne.
Jupiter, . .	50	343	„ George Losack.
Crescent, . .	36	264	„ Edward Buller.
Sphinx, . .	24	155	„ Andrew Tod.
Moselle, . .	16	121	„ Charles Brisbane.
Rattlesnake, .	16	121	„ Edward Ramage.
Echo, . .	16	121	„ John Turner.
Hope, . .	16	121	„ T. Alexander.
Total, .	642	4903	

At sunset on the 16th the squadron arrived off Saldanha Bay, and Sir George, having sent the Crescent to reconnoitre, found to his great joy that the

enemy was still there—three ships of the line, three frigates, and three other vessels being at anchor inside. The British vessels stood into the bay in order of battle; but night falling as the rear of the squadron was extended for action, Sir George judged it expedient to come to anchor within shot of the enemy's ships. Elphinstone on reflection found that he was wholly master of the situation. He had cut off all means of retreat from the Dutch; and the smallness of their force, although they had a large number of troops on board, forbade the possibility of their offering a successful resistance. Revolving these matters over-night, Elphinstone came to the conclusion that his most humane course would be to demand a surrender; and next morning at daybreak he despatched Lieutenant Coffin of the Monarch with the following letter to the Dutch Admiral:—

"*To his Excellency the Admiral or Officer commanding the ships of the United States, now lying in Saldanha Bay.*

"SIR,—It is unnecessary for me to detail the force I have the honour to command, because it is in your view and speaks for itself; but it is for you to consider the efficacy of a resistance with the force under your command.

"Humanity is an incumbent duty on all men; therefore, to spare the effusion of human blood, I

request a surrender of the ships under your command, otherwise it will be my duty to embrace the earliest moment of making a serious attack on them, the issue of which is not difficult for you to guess.—I have the honour to be, &c.,

"G. K. ELPHINSTONE.

"H.M.S. Monarch,
Saldanha Bay, *August* 16, 1796."

In spite of the inferiority of his force and the difficulties of his position, Lucas, the Dutch Rear-Admiral, hesitated to surrender without firing a gun in defence of his squadron. He had committed a serious error in allowing Elphinstone to catch him in a trap; and anxious as the Republic was to regain the Cape, he could foresee the condemnation that his misfortune would meet with when the news should reach the Hague. He accordingly endeavoured to obtain delay, and sent back by Lieutenant Coffin a verbal request for an armistice until the following morning, to enable him to hold a council of war. But though Elphinstone was willing to save the Dutch from the chances of an unequal struggle, he had no intention of allowing them an opportunity of destroying their ships and escaping on shore, which they might be expected to seize if they were allowed to remain undisturbed another night; and so Lieutenant Coffin was sent back with a second letter, demanding an assurance on the Dutch Admiral's honour that no

attempt would be made to damage any of the ships, or to destroy or make away with any of the guns, stores, or effects on board, under the alternative of an immediate attack. It required all Elphinstone's patience to await the slow decision of the Dutch; and he remained with his vessels drawn up in the order of attack, and his guns trained on the shut-in squadron, until Coffin's boat put back to the flag-ship, with this note from Admiral Engelbertus Lucas:—

"*To his Excellency Admiral G. K. Elphinstone, Commander-in-Chief of his Britannic Majesty's Squadron.*

"EXCELLENCY,—The two letters delivered to me by your officer, for want of an interpreter have taken a long time to translate.

"Your Excellency may rest assured of receiving a positive answer to-morrow morning, and that during this time no damage whatever shall be done to the vessels of my squadron, which I promise you upon my honour.

"This time is necessary to call to my aid the captains of the frigates detached at the bottom of the bay, in order to hold a council of war, whom I am obliged to assemble on account of responsibility.—I have the honour to be, &c.,

"ENGELBERTUS LUCAS.

"On board the Dordrecht,
August 16, 1796."

The two squadrons stood facing each other all day during the 16th, the Dutch holding council on board their Admiral's flag-ship, while boats were constantly passing between the various vessels, carrying messages from one to the other in evident perplexity. Elphinstone on his side maintained a close watch on all their proceedings, with cleared decks and men posted at quarters; and all through the night a careful look-out was maintained, lest the Dutch should seek to desert their ships, and take refuge with the disaffected burghers on shore.

At nine o'clock on the following morning, a Dutch lieutenant came on board the Monarch, with the results of the council of war's deliberation scheduled in the form of articles of capitulation. As Elphinstone's answers are very characteristic of the mixture of blunt firmness and generosity which he always showed in treating with an enemy, it will be of interest to set forth the full text of the negotiations.

ARTICLES OF CAPITULATION, *agreed upon in Saldanha Bay, this 17th August* 1796, *between his Excellency Rear-Admiral Engelbertus Lucas, Commander-in-Chief of the squadron of ships of the United States, now lying in Saldanha Bay, and the Honourable Sir George Keith Elphinstone, Knight of the Most Honourable and Military Order of the Bath, Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and*

Commander-in-Chief of his Britannic Majesty's ships and vessels in the Indian Seas at the Cape of Good Hope, and of those now lying in Saldanha Bay.

Art. I. Rear-Admiral Lucas will deliver up to Vice-Admiral Elphinstone the squadron under his command, upon the conditions of the capitulation under-written.

Answer. The Vice-Admiral is actuated by principles of humanity, to prevent the effusion of human blood, and considers the surrender of the Dutch squadron as a matter of necessity, and not of choice.

Art. II. The British Admiral shall appoint two ships as cartels, the frigates Braave and Sirènes, in which the Rear-Admiral, his officers and midshipmen, and ships' crews, shall be permitted to proceed without hindrance to Holland; and the officers shall keep their side-arms.

Answer. Inadmissible: by reason that the cartel-ships sent from Toulon and various other places have been detained, and their crews imprisoned, contrary to the laws and usage of war, and the general faith of nations; but officers becoming prisoners shall be allowed to keep and wear their swords and side-arms, as long as they behave with becoming propriety, and shall be treated with the respect due to their ranks.

Art. III. The Dutch Admiral, his officers, and crew, shall retain their private property without being searched, and the remainder of the crew who cannot be sent on board the frigates, are to be sent to Holland in such a manner as the British Admiral shall judge proper.

Answer. Private property of every denomination will be secured to the proprietors to the fullest extent, in con-

sequence of British Acts of Parliament and his Britannic Majesty's positive orders, as well as from the general disposition of British officers to treat with the utmost liberality those who become their prisoners.

Art. IV. They shall be provided with such quantities of provisions as may be necessary for those who embark on board the two frigates; and to be so provided from the Dutch ships.

Answer. Answered by the sixth article.

Art. V. These cartel-ships, on their arrival in Holland, shall be sent to England, and there delivered to his Britannic Majesty.

Answer. Already answered by the second article.

Art. VI. The crews shall be permitted to go on shore for refreshment after their long voyage.

Answer. This must depend upon the Major-General commanding the troops on shore; but the Commander-in-Chief will use his utmost endeavours to render the situation of every individual as comfortable as possible, as to victualling, lodging, and every accommodation, either on board or on shore, as can be procured or reasonably expected; and he will dispose of such as become prisoners, as suitably to their inclinations as his duty to his sovereign and the interests of his country will admit. The sick shall be received into his Majesty's hospitals, and taken care of equally with the British sick.

It is furthermore the Commander-in-Chief's duty and inclination to send to Europe such as become prisoners by the most speedy and convenient conveyance.

Art. VII. The national flags of Batavia shall continue

to be displayed on the Dutch ships, as long as their crews remain on board.

Answer. The Batavian colours must be struck so soon as the ships are taken possession of by his Britannic Majesty's officers.

G. K. ELPHINSTONE.
ENGELBERTUS LUCAS.
JOHN JACKSON, *Secretary to the British Commander-in-Chief.*
CLEMENS BENEDICTUS, *Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch Squadrons.*

In returning the terms of capitulation, Elphinstone wrote the following letter to Admiral Lucas:—

"SIR,—I have had the honour to receive your letter with the proposal of a capitulation, and I have now the honour to enclose you my letter and answers thereunto, which I hope will be accepted. I have mentioned to Captain Clariffe my inclination to accommodate your Excellency and the other officers inclined to return to Europe upon their parole, with the Maria store-ship, or in any British vessels, of which there are many at the Cape; but any of the public armed ships I dare not presume to permit to depart.

"Your Excellency may rest assured of every good office within my reach. Should the enclosed articles not meet with your approbation, you will be pleased to order the flag of truce to be hauled down, as a

signal that either party may commence hostilities.—I have the honour to be, with great respect, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

"G. K. ELPHINSTONE.

"H.B.M.S. Monarch, Saldanha Bay,
August 17, 1796.

The Dutch Admiral, impressed not less by his inability to offer a successful resistance than by Elphinstone's mingled courtesy and firmness, accepted the British terms, and the different vessels in the Dutch squadron struck their colours at five o'clock in the afternoon. The details of the ships which surrendered are as follows:—

Ships.	Guns.	Men.	Commanders.
Dordrecht, . .	66	370	Rear-Admiral Lucas.
Revolution, . .	66	400	Captain Rhubende.
Van Tromp, . .	54	280	„ Valkenburg.
Castor, . . .	44	240	„ Clariffe.
Braave, . . .	40	234	„ Zoetmans.
Bellona, . . .	28	130	„ Valk.
Sirène, . . .	26	130	„ De Cerf.
Havik, . . .	18	76	„ Bezemer.
Maria, store-ship, .	...	112	
Total, . .	342	1972	

The sea had risen again in the meantime, and the bay was so tempestuous that Elphinstone was unable to take formal possession of the ships until the next day. On board the squadron were found 2000 infantry and artillerymen, under Colonel Henri and M. Grandewort, who became prisoners of war, and

were sent back to Europe on their parole, as the British authorities at the Cape did not consider it safe to allow prisoners to remain in a colony that was still disaffected, and that might be encouraged by their presence to rise at any time in insurrection. In his despatch to the Admiralty, dated 19th August, giving an account of the capture, Elphinstone thus explains the humane feelings by which he was actuated throughout the negotiations with Admiral Lucas: "The consequent joy of this fortunate event is much augmented from the consolatory reflection on its accomplishment without the effusion of human blood, or injury to either the enemy's or British ships—not a single shot having been fired.

"I must, however, beg leave to observe that any resistance on the part of the enemy could only have occasioned the wanton sacrifice of a few lives; for I doubt not that, had their number been adequate to their situation, their conduct would have confirmed the acknowledged merit at all times accorded to the national spirit of the subjects of the United States; and I can with similar confidence assure you that the officers and men under my command would have exhibited a conduct equally creditable to themselves. . . . I have long been expecting this arrival, and was thereby enabled to be perfectly prepared to receive them, and constantly to keep a vigilant look-out."

On his return to Cape Town, Elphinstone at once

set to work to transmute his prizes into British vessels of war, and before the end of September he had added eleven sail of the line to the King's navy in the Indian seas. Such an acquisition was at this time of the greatest value, for the Indian fleet had been so broken up and detached to maintain recent conquests, that it was with the greatest difficulty ships could be procured, when need for any particular service occurred. In the disposal of his prisoners, Elphinstone met with a deal of trouble from the Dutch obstinacy about giving paroles, and from the impossibility of detaining the prisoners at the Cape, where their presence might prove a danger to the Government in case of any popular commotion. Admiral Lucas, the Dutch Commander-in-Chief, probably fearing the reception he would meet with in Holland —although Elphinstone bore a generous testimony to his conduct—elected to accompany the Admiral to England. A number of the prisoners were enlisted for the Company's service, and despatched to India; and the others were sent home to Britain, as rapidly as transport could be provided for them.

Elphinstone's work at the Cape was now brought to a successful termination. There was no danger of a second attempt to recapture the colony on the part of the Dutch, whose maritime power was broken by the loss of their vessels, and who had by this time been deprived of their chief possessions in the Far East. Sir James Craig had been strengthened

by reinforcements from home, and was in a position to keep the burghers in efficient check. Elphinstone accordingly reported that his task was accomplished; and made his preparations for returning to Britain, a step which the state of his health, shattered by overwork and frequent indisposition, rendered urgently necessary. On 7th October he quitted the Cape in the Monarch, followed by the congratulations and good wishes of the Governor and garrison. Admiral Rainier was left to take command in the Indian seas; and Elphinstone before starting drew up a full set of instructions for the direction of the senior naval officer at the Cape, in the event of any attempt being made by the French to disturb our new colony.

The Monarch made a good passage, and arrived at Crookhaven on the morning of 23d December. Apprehensions were entertained at the time of a French descent on the coast of Ireland, and Elphinstone, the day after his arrival, sent the Monarch to cruise in search of the enemy, whose ships had been recently seen off Bantry Bay. On the 25th and 26th, a furious gale, with sleet and snow, blew upon the Irish coast; and a boat's crew, which was driven ashore from a dismantled frigate, reported that the French force consisted of seventeen ships of the line, with General Hoche and 25,000 men on board. Several of the fleet had been compelled by the violence of the gale to slip their cables and run to sea, and the flag-ship of the Vice-Admiral, Morard de Galles, had

fouled one of the frigates, and carried away all her masts. It was not until the 29th that the gale moderated; and next day Elphinstone reported the wreck of the French frigate Impatiente at Crookhaven, from which only five men were saved. This gale completely frustrated the objects of the French expedition; while the appearance of Sir Edward Pellew with a small squadron speedily made General Hoche abandon any intention of landing; and Elphinstone was enabled to continue his voyage to Spithead, which the Monarch reached on 3d January 1797.

CHAPTER X.

THE NORE AND PLYMOUTH MUTINIES.

1797.

ADMIRAL ELPHINSTONE had no cause to complain of an ungrateful country when he returned with his South African honours. He was welcomed as the conqueror of the Cape and the captor of the Dutch fleet, and he found the Admiralty thoroughly appreciative of the efforts which he had made to convert Cape Town and Table Bay into a great British naval station, which would enable England to maintain its supremacy in the South Seas. On his way home a letter had crossed his voyage, informing him in what light his services were regarded by the Court and the Government; and it was handed to him in duplicate on his arrival in London. It was to this effect:—

"LONDON, 20*th November* 1796.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your letters, public and private, and sincerely congratulate you on the

success which has attended his Majesty's arms under your able and zealous exertions. I have asked and obtained the King's consent to your having an Irish peerage to yourself, with remainder to your daughter; but I am at a perfect loss how to proceed further, as you give me no hint what title you would wish to take.—I am, &c.,

"HENRY DUNDAS."

Thus Elphinstone found on his arrival in England that the great prize of a sailor's ambition had come to crown not only the hard work of later years, but the wearisome waiting and manifold disappointments with which he had had to contend in the earlier stages of his service. He had bought his honours dearly, inch by inch, not without danger, not without hard travail, both of body and mind. He must have had the feeling which is common to men who fret for success before they have had an opportunity of earning it, and have looked back with amusement to the querulous complaints which he had written to his uncle the Earl Marischal when he was a young officer on the Balearic station. He must have missed those warm congratulations which would have come from his kind relative in that hour of triumph; but he was not forgetful of his memory when he made choice of a title. What rights remained of the Earl Marischal of Scotland had passed to the male representatives of the family, the house of Kintore; but

Elphinstone showed his respect for his uncle's memory by choosing the name of Keith for his peerage. He soon signified this decision to Mr Dundas; and on 7th March his patent was issued, creating him Baron Keith of Stonehaven Marischal in the peerage of Ireland, to him and his heirs-male; and in default of his male issue to Margaret Mercer, then his only daughter, and to her heirs-male. It was an anomaly of the time before the union with Ireland that distinguished Scotsmen were ennobled at the expense of the peerage of that country, an accident which has done not a little for the prestige of the Irish nobility. But Lord Keith was a man out of whom much more work was to be got; and the Government made a prudent bargain in his case in leaving other prizes still within his reach.

Many changes had taken place in Lord Keith's family during those years in which he had been doing hard work for the country. Both his parents were dead, and his brother John, now Lord Elphinstone, was a representative peer, and Lieutenant-Governor of Edinburgh Castle; and was married to a daughter of Lord Ruthven. His elder brother William, under whom Lord Keith had made his Indian voyage, had also been prosperous, and was now a director of the East India Company. Several of his sisters were married, and his wife was the next heir to the Scotch barony of Nairne, which

in due time, were the attainder removed, would come to his daughter. But his honours and affluent circumstances in no wise abated Lord Keith's passion for active employment, and he was as anxious to be afloat again and in a position to lay his flag-ship alongside of an enemy's vessel as the Admiralty was to provide him with a command. It was only a short holiday that could be spared to an officer of his ability.

Among other tokens of appreciation which Lord Keith received at this time was the present of a magnificent sword, of the value of 500 guineas, from the Board of Directors of the East India Company; who, even more than the King's Government, had reaped benefit from the conquest of the Cape, and from the exertions the Admiral had made to consult the convenience of India-bound vessels in his arrangements for converting Cape Town into a naval station.

While Lord Keith was still on shore, the symptoms of discontent which had shown themselves among the seamen during the spring of 1797, and which had also found expression in anonymous letters to Lord Howe and the Admiralty, suddenly broke out into open mutiny. On 15th April, when Lord Bridport from the Queen Charlotte gave the signal to the Channel fleet lying off Spithead to prepare for sea, the sailors suddenly refused to obey the order; and it was found that an organised com-

bination existed in every ship, the object of which was to obtain a redress of grievances before they quitted the port. Threats of punishment and appeals to duty and patriotism were equally in vain on the part of the officers; the Queen Charlotte became the headquarters of the mutiny; and a council, composed of two delegates from each ship, sat daily in the Admiral's cabin. The attitude of the men, however, was less that of rebellion than of a strike. They preserved discipline throughout the fleet, enforced respect for the officers, and readily executed all orders, except that to prepare for putting out to sea. There were, however, two elements in the conspiracy, as the later phases of the mutiny sufficiently proved: a well-founded dissatisfaction with pay, provisions, and pension; and also a dangerous spirit of republicanism, springing directly from the principles and example of the French Revolution.

At all events the seamen had shown great judgment in selecting the moment for action. Our naval position was then highly precarious. The failure of Lord Malmesbury's negotiations for peace with the Republic had been a signal for renewing the war with great vigour on both sides; and although Jervis's glorious victory off St Vincent in the preceding February had raised the national spirit to the highest point, we had still the combined naval powers of Holland, France, and Spain to contend

with, while our late acquisitions of the enemies' colonies compelled Britain to keep a large portion of her fleet scattered throughout the world. Duncan was guarding the Dutch off the mouth of the Texel, while Jervis still held what remained of the naval power of Spain in check off the coasts of the Peninsula: but it depended on the Channel fleet to keep the French in bounds; and if the Republic could succeed in raising the blockade of the Channel ports, and in joining with the fleet of either of its allies, the position of Great Britain must have speedily become one of imminent peril. The mutiny in the Channel at once brought the maintenance of our naval power to the verge of a crisis. The Lords Commissioners hurried down to Portsmouth, and the Admiralty secured the services of Lord Keith to aid by his advice and experience in dealing with the mutineers. The temperate conduct of the men, and the reasonableness of their demands, made the task of conciliation more easy. The Admiralty recognised the sailors' grievances, and a Bill was passed through Parliament ratifying the required concessions; while, under the influence of Lord Howe, the men resumed their duty, and Lord Bridport sailed to resume the blockade of Brest. But though the just grievances of the navy had been remedied, the spirit of rebellion, which had simultaneously shown itself in the fleets of both Duncan and Jervis, had to be dealt with after a different

fashion. On 20th May the vessels in the North Sea broke away from the former, and drew themselves up at the mouth of the Thames, under the command of Richard Parker, the "President of the Floating Republic." This was a movement with which the Government could make no truce. Parliament unanimously agreed to adopt the most energetic measures to crush the mutiny, after making an effort to induce those who had been misled by the influence of their comrades to separate themselves from the democratic insurgents. Lord Keith's services were again called in, and he was despatched to Sheerness, which the mutineers threatened to bombard, to concert with the Admiralty measures for protecting the port of London, and for overawing the rebellious vessels.

Lord Keith arrived at Sheerness on 2d June, and on the same day wrote the following letter to Earl Spencer, which marks both the gravity of the situation and the promptitude with which the Admiral took in its bearings:—

"I have only been here a few hours, and have had a short conversation with Sir Charles Grey. I have employed my time in examining the state of the garrison and dockyard equally, to ascertain where situations may be taken to add to their strength. The first object that presents itself is the Isle of Grain, opposite to this garrison, a point essentially necessary

to occupy, and which may be very easily done. But I understand from Sir Charles Grey that there is a want of ordnance and artillery. Some improvements in my opinion may be made in the dockyard, which will tend to render it very disagreeable, if not altogether impossible, for the revolted ships to remain in the harbour, even should they attempt to pass the batteries.

"Of ships we have very few here, as your lordship knows, but I cannot help thinking that the Warrior and two gunboats which are at Chatham might have guns put into them, and be brought down here to operate with the Clyde, and the Firm gunboat. Admiral Buckner has already ordered a line of hulks to be drawn across the harbour's mouth, to form a chain, by booms and cables from each other; and he has directed me to place the little force we have here in a situation to co-operate with the fort and batteries.

"I beg leave to notify to your lordship the propriety of equipping a number of small fire-vessels. I do not mean regular fire-ships, which require time, but small vessels fitted with rosin, tow, reeds, and sulphur, or any combustible matter, which might be employed with great efficiency in case of necessity. There is now a line-of-battle ship, a frigate, and a sloop under sail, probably intended for the mouth of the Thames. I beg pardon for suggesting that if the ships in the River Thames were manned by volunteer

seamen, and from the Society Corps, and attended by fire-ships as above described, this detachment might be easily subdued, and the Lancaster reduced to order.

"A number of letters have been found here addressed to the mutinous ships, which the Commander-in-Chief agrees with me in opinion ought not to be delivered, and has therefore requested the postmaster to convey them instantly to the Secretary of State's office.

"If anything else should occur, from time to time I will take the liberty to trouble your lordship with it. A report prevails that the delegates have opened communication with the shore, and have permitted boats to pass and repass here. We could distinctly discern what they were doing in the ships.—I have the honour to be, &c., KEITH."

Lord Keith's correspondence from the Nore affords a very startling idea of the defenceless state of London and the shipping in the Thames, and of the crisis which might have been brought about, had the mutineers sailed up the river, instead of idly wrangling with each other at their anchorage off the Nore. They wanted the courage of their convictions, and the sense of justice on their side, which the seamen at Portsmouth may have possessed; and while the ringleaders were perfectly sensible that they had placed themselves outside the pale of pardon, the

mass of the seamen had no inclination to tighten the ropes that were already about their necks. Parker's hopes that the revolt at the Nore would give the signal for a general mutiny of the fleet, soon proved to be fallacious; and the strict blockade kept up on the enemy's ports in the Channel prevented the possibility of assistance from France. Admiral Buckner and Lord Keith, rightly judging the feelings of the sailors, thought it best to allow the dissensions and fears of the mutineers to work their natural effect; and the longer the revolted crews saw themselves left alone, and the only preparations made on shore to be those of a defensive nature, the more uneasy they became, and the stronger grew their apprehensions as to what the end might be. The firmness with which their demands were repelled convinced them that they could expect no such considerate and lenient treatment as the sailors who had struck at Portsmouth had received; and it was soon obvious to the authorities in Sheerness that the mutiny would work its own cure, if it was only let alone.

For some days following his arrival, Lord Keith was busy taking the depositions of sailors from the mutinous ships, who had either surrendered themselves, or had been captured on shore. Their evidence clearly confirmed his impression that there were two parties in the mutiny: the ringleaders, who were animated by seditious and republican principles;

and the sailors, whose imaginary grievances had enabled the former to make tools of them. Almost immediately on Lord Keith's arrival at Sheerness, an attempt had been made by the delegates, who were afraid of the effect that his character and popularity might produce upon the sailors, to excite their feelings against his lordship personally. The Saldanha Bay prize-money had not yet been realised and paid, and some of the men of the Cape fleet were now serving in the mutinous ships. A base report was circulated that the Admiral had received the prize-money, and was defrauding the men of their just share. On any other occasion Lord Keith would doubtless have treated the calumny with the contempt that it merited, but at such a critical time he felt the responsibility of allowing the men to remain under a delusion; and the following frank and spirited letter was written, as much that he might have an opportunity of appealing to the better feelings of the sailors, as that he thought any explanation regarding the Saldanha prize-money to be necessary:—

"SHEERNESS, *June* 6, 1797.

"FELLOW-SEAMEN,—I am this instant informed by my brother, Mr Elphinstone, and Mr Jackson (the Admiral's Secretary), that you suppose they withhold your Cape prize-money, and that I myself and the officers had received the said prize-money. The

ships' companies of the Monarch, Daphne, Prince Frederick, and Havik had the same idea, and wrote me on the subject. I assure you, as I did them, that I have never received one farthing of prize-money since I left England, nor am I a man that would do so until the just demands of those who served with me are satisfied. I had reason to hope that you had known me better. The real state of facts is: The Saldanha ships are condemned, but the army makes a claim which the navy resists; and thus we are before a court of law, which will soon be over. The navy board has refused our valuation, and will not pay the money, which has given me a great deal of concern. The list of articles captured at the Cape only came home of late; and they are in the Court of Admiralty for condemnation. The ships captured in Simon's Bay before the place was taken are detained by the Dutch commissioners, to which we cannot agree. At all events, a large sum will soon be due; but, alas! it will be impossible to divide it, by reason of the present state of insurrection at the Nore. In like manner the ships cannot receive their pay, which is ready to be paid, as the Act of Parliament forfeits all pay and prize-money to Government and the Chest of Chatham, until they receive his Majesty's free pardon.

"For God's sake reflect on the happy times in which we served together, and on the advantages we brought to our country. Be not too long misled

by designing men; but return to your old friends, who, like myself, have spent their days among you, and who can defy the world to say they ever did you an injury. Do not lose the advantage you have worked for, of pay and prize-money, for an empty shadow. Will you be better looked to, or more happy under a French government? Perhaps you may ruin the nation, but you will be miserable. While your respected Admiral is off the Texel unreinforced, blocking up the Dutch, you are idle at the Nore, under wicked influence. I would add much more, but there is reason to believe that truth is kept from you, therefore having said this much in my justification, I bid you farewell, until we can meet as before, like men and friends, when you will find me, with true affection, yours, &c.,

"KEITH."

On 9th June the Ardent and the Repulse broke away from the mutineers, under a heavy fire from the insurgent vessels, and ran for protection under the guns of Sheerness. Next day Lord Keith went on board both vessels. He first visited the Repulse, and having turned up the ship's company, he addressed them, and requested to know whether they were prepared to return to their duty. The men replied that they did so with joy, and begged Lord Keith's intercession with the King. Lord Keith then asked whether they had to complain of any

ringleader or delegate who had oppressed or misled them; and the crew promised to consider the matter and send their names. Lord Keith was thanked, and cheered as he left the ship. The crew of the Ardent also made an unconditional submission, but declined to make any accusation against ringleaders; and two days after his lordship hoisted his flag, which had been flying on the royal yacht Mary since his arrival at Sheerness, at the Ardent's fore-topmast-head.

On the 13th three line-of-battle ships and two frigates deserted from the mutineers, which Lord Keith likewise visited, conferring with the crew and making numerous arrests. One of these, the Monmouth, had aggravated its mutinous conduct by the cruel treatment which its officers had received, several of whom had been flogged, and others put in irons. The prisoners made on board of these vessels endeavoured to interest Lord Keith in their situation, and pleaded that the fleet might not be sent away until the witnesses they wished to summon in their exculpation could be examined. Lord Keith replied to them the same evening:—

"I have received your communication of this date, and have only to thank God that the laws of this country are such that no man can be put upon his trial without being duly informed thereof, and due notice given for collecting the necessary evidences.

The disposition of the King's fleet is a matter of so much consequence, that, if I were even to know its destination, I durst not mention it; but one thing I am sure is, that no officer or man necessary to your acquittal will be withdrawn. I have every reason to believe that an insulted nation will require a fair but public trial, and I would therefore recommend that you should prepare yourselves accordingly. I am obliged by the favourable opinion you express of me, but, as an individual, I have no power to control these laws which I, like others, am in duty bound to obey. Notwithstanding, I have ever been an affectionate friend to all deserving seamen."

The red flag was hauled down on all the mutinous ships between the 13th and the 15th; and on the latter day the Sandwich, which had been the centre of the insurrection, ran under the guns of Sheerness and delivered up Parker, who had been the prime mover and head of the mutiny. Lord Keith then went through the fleet and received the submission of each ship, examining into the origin of the mutiny, and picking out the ringleaders for punishment. The duty was a disagreeable one for an officer so attached to his service as the Admiral was; but he discharged it in a dignified spirit of stern justice; and the patient hearing which he everywhere gave to well-founded complaints helped greatly to re-

assure the seamen, and make them return with alacrity to their duty.

Scarcely was subordination restored at the Nore when Lord Keith was hurried off to Portsmouth, to procure a ship and act as second in command of the Channel fleet under Lord Bridport,—the distrust which had been excited by the conduct of the seamen, as well as the numerous services which were to be performed in the Channel, having made the Admiralty anxious to strengthen Lord Bridport's hands. He was ordered to hoist his flag on the Queen Charlotte, which had been the chief centre of the Spithead mutiny; but as that vessel was then at Plymouth, his lordship proceeded at first on board the Cumberland to St Helens, and here he found orders forwarded to him by the telegraph of those days to proceed without a moment's delay to Plymouth, where the ships in the harbour were showing signs of mutiny. Lord Keith went off at once by land, "having really nothing on shore but the clothes in which I stood," as he tells the Admiralty. He started from St Helens on 3d July, and next evening was on board the Queen Charlotte in Cawsand Bay, and had learned the situation of affairs from Sir Richard King, the Port-Admiral. The Saturn was the main source of the disaffection, and on the 5th July Lord Keith went on board, and inquired into the causes of the misbehaviour of the crew.

"I there had the mortification to find," he writes to the Port-Admiral, "a greater degree of gloom and taciturnity than I had hitherto observed in the other ships. After setting forth the enormities they had been guilty of in the strongest terms I was able, I told them their ringleaders must be delivered up; and I trusted the well-behaved men of the ship would bring them forth to save the lives of others, for if I was obliged to select men for trial I might be led into error. They were still silent. It then became my duty to single out particular persons, which I did. The two captains of the forecastle then came forward, and said they would tell me a great deal, notwithstanding their lives would answer for it, as there were many around them who were prepared to stab them with their knives, or any other men who should speak a word, for it had been sworn to. I brought them in to me, and told them I would protect them, or any other men, who would follow so good an example; but that I was determined to have the man who wrote the oath, and he that administered it, before I left the ship, let the consequence be what it would. Francis Kenyon, a marine whom I had confined, called out he would tell me the whole, if I would save his life by protecting him from the ship's company, or admit him a king's evidence. *Answer.*—I have no power of this sort, but I think you are taking the best steps to recommend yourself. He said, 'I wrote

the oath because I could write. Sergeant Dickinson of the marines dictated the oath in the following words: "I swear to be true to the ship's company, and to abide by the rules, resolutions, and regulations of the fleet at Spithead," &c. &c.' I ordered Dickinson to be stripped of his arms and confined; also John Farrell, seaman. At one moment there appeared an inclination to have resisted; but upon my telling them that I had been on board the Marlborough, and left that ship's company fully determined to do their duty in every instance, and that all resistance was vain, they withdrew, and all the men were put in the boat and sent to the Cambridge, under the care of Captain Lane. How far their lordships may be pleased to admit one so deeply concerned in the business as Kenyon to be a king's evidence is not for me to determine; but I am of opinion that John Cole, a quartermaster, may be extremely useful; and although he was one of those who took possession of the ship from the captain, he bears a good character, and declares he only did it under fear of being hanged. The ship's company had not a shadow of complaint against any officer excepting the purser, Mr Philip Vicompte, who had uniformly cheated them in weight and measure. Captain Douglas had promised it should be inquired into the moment the ship should return from her cruise; and I am of opinion it should be so.

"It will require more time to examine into the

different acts of violence, and evidence that can support the same, than I hold at the moment. I therefore leave that to abler hands, and have the honour, &c. KEITH."

The suppression of the Plymouth mutiny is thus described by Colonel Bastard, Member of Parliament for Devon, in a letter to Mr Addington, then Speaker of the House of Commons, dated 16th July:—

"Lord Keith on his arrival acted with a firmness and resolution that instantly restored subordination to the ships, and from that moment things have worn the most tranquil appearance. . . . Lord Keith went on board the Saturn, and gave the crew his opinion of their conduct, telling them that if they surrendered fourteen of their ringleaders he should be satisfied; but if they did not, he had a list of fifty. After an appearance of crowding on him, and a threat from him to run the first man through who stirred, fourteen men were delivered up to him, and immediately put in irons."[1] This act at once put an end to the mutiny, and though some isolated cases of insubordination occurred, there was no appearance afterwards of combined sedition in the Channel Fleet.

Lord Keith met with no opportunities of active service during the rest of 1797. He was absent on a cruise when the State thanksgiving took place on

[1] Pellew's Life of Lord Sidmouth, i. 190.

19th December, at St Paul's, for the recent naval successes which Britain had won at St Vincent, Camperdown, and the Cape. The King, Court, and Ministers went through the city in an imposing procession, of which the victorious admirals, their more distinguished prisoners, captured cannon, and flags formed prominent features. Rear-Admiral Douglas, as the representative of Lord Keith, rode in the same carriage with Duncan, the hero of Camperdown; and Admiral Lucas, who had surrendered to Elphinstone in Saldanha Bay, walked in the procession as a prisoner of war. *Te Deum* was solemnly sung for the victories, and a thanksgiving sermon preached before their Majesties and the splendid congregation; but so little impression was made upon the mob by either the imposing spectacle or the exalted piety, that Mr Pitt, we read, with difficulty escaped maltreatment in the streets on his way home.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PURSUIT OF ADMIRAL BRUIX.

1798–1799.

In 1798 Lord Keith was transferred from the Channel fleet, to act as second in command to Jervis, now Earl St Vincent, who had been his first captain when he joined the Gosport as a young midshipman some six-and-thirty years back; and to whose lessons of tight discipline and of thorough seamanship Lord Keith had been not a little indebted during the intervening years. His own advancement had been rapid, compared with that of his old commander, who had been half a century in the service; and whose merits as an admiral the splendid victory off Cape St Vincent, in the previous February, had only recently roused the country to fully appreciate. Lord Keith sailed in the Foudroyant, 84 guns, which Jervis himself had commanded on the American coast and during the first years of the French war, and joined Lord St Vincent on the Peninsular station early in the year.

The Mediterranean fleet consisted of fifty-two sail of the line, but it was much broken up in detachments, owing to the scattered area over which the French Republic had spread its armaments on the Mediterranean shores. Nelson was commanding on the Italian coast, while Sir Sidney Smith was in charge of a squadron in the Levant. Lord St Vincent himself guarded the seas between Gibraltar and the Balearic Isles, keeping a steady eye upon Minorca, which had then been recently taken possession of by Commodore Duckworth and General the Hon. Charles Stewart, and which was important as the only naval port and arsenal inside the Mediterranean under British control. To Lord Keith was assigned the duty of watching the Spanish coast outside the Straits, and of blockading Cadiz harbour, where a fleet of nineteen sail of the line was lying, ready to break out to sea whenever an opportune moment offered itself for acting with its French allies.

No British fleet was ever more gallantly officered than that under Earl St Vincent; but at the time of Lord Keith's arrival, feelings far from harmonious unfortunately prevailed among its commanders. Lord St Vincent's health had for some time been failing, although his vigorous and energetic spirit showed no signs of decay; and he leaned much upon Nelson, who, previously to Lord Keith's arrival, had practically had his own way in the command of the fleet. Unfortunately the fatal influence

of Lady Hamilton had by this time involved Nelson in the Neapolitan interest, and given a bias to his views of both duty and policy. Ill feeling had been created between him and Sir Sidney Smith, by the appointment of the latter to an independent command through a job or blunder on the part of the Admiralty; and though the generous nature of Nelson never grudged the honours or success of a brother officer, his susceptibilities were hurt on this occasion; and the official explanations rather aggravated than removed the original offence. Lord St Vincent's marked partiality for Nelson had also occasioned unpleasant feelings among the other admirals, leading to disagreeable controversies, like that between the Commander-in-Chief and Sir John Orde, which only the interposition of the authorities prevented from ending in a personal encounter, immediately after the return of both to England. Lord Keith, both by position and character, was above the reach of professional jealousy, and kept aloof from these dissensions; but his ideas of duty did not square with delegating his powers to another, or with allowing a subordinate in command to assume responsibilities which properly rested upon himself; and this feature in his character must be borne in mind, if we would correctly understand the true nature of subsequent differences arising in the Mediterranean fleet between him and other officers, whose only aim was the common one of lofty patriotism

and devotion to the service of their country. No commander could sympathise more with ardour for personal distinction on the part of his followers, or yield it a more generous recognition than was the wont of Lord Keith; but he had very firm notions about discipline, and could only extend a qualified toleration to success, when purchased at the expense of disobedience or indiscretion.

On 14th February 1799, Lord Keith was promoted from the rank of Vice-Admiral of the Blue to be Vice-Admiral of the Red, and shifted his flag from the Foudroyant to the Barfleur, 98 guns, Captain Barker, which had once before been his flag-ship, when serving in the Channel as Rear-Admiral of the White, before his departure on the Cape expedition. His squadron was a small one, averaging generally eleven sail of the line, and seldom more than fifteen, while the duty was arduous, the weather unfavourable, and water and provisions both difficult to be procured. Some of his ships were in so crazy a state, as to compel him to send them to Gibraltar to be patched up, after each of the many severe gales they had to encounter that spring. Lord St Vincent was constant in his requests to the Admiralty for more vessels; and he wrote in the month of February to Earl Spencer that "there should really be something like a relief to the ships which form the blockade of Cadiz, some of them having been ten

or eleven months out of port, and the health of their crews put to great risk, although it has hitherto been miraculously preserved."

All the spring months, until the beginning of May, Lord Keith kept up the blockade of Cadiz, although greatly tossed about by rough weather, which frequently compelled the squadron to run for shelter to Tetuan, whither they had also to repair for victuals and water. The Spanish fleet remained all the time quiescent, even during these absences; although it was known that the French were urging their allies to attempt the recapture of Minorca, and reproaching them with their inactivity. A movement on the part of the Republic, however, presently afforded the Spanish Admiral an opportunity of action.

Vice-Admiral Bruix, one of the most energetic naval officers of the French Republic, had gone down to Brest early in the year, and exerted himself with great success to equip a fleet, in lieu of that destroyed by Nelson at the Nile the previous August. Lord Bridport, who was commanding in the Channel, had information of the preparations, and a constant watch was kept upon Brest harbour, to prevent the Frenchmen from breaking out to sea; but, notwithstanding, Admiral Bruix managed to evade the English vessels, and, on the evening of the 25th April, to put into the Atlantic with the most numerous and best appointed arma-

ment that had ever sailed from a French port. The fleet comprised one 120-gun ship, three 110 guns, two of 80 guns, nineteen of 74 guns, five frigates, three corvettes, and two despatch-boats, with from 23,000 to 24,000 men on board. Admiral Bruix, also, had roused the spirit of the sailors by proclamations, and by the promise of the division of a third of the prize-money to be won among the crews.

The French had given out that Ireland was the object of Admiral Bruix's expedition; and Lord Bridport, when he found that the French had escaped, ordered his fleet to rendezvous off Cape Clear, and despatched at the same time expresses to Lords St Vincent and Keith with the news. Lord Keith had just returned from one of his visits to Tetuan, and was lying eight miles off Cadiz, when he received intelligence that the French fleet had been seen two days before, passing Oporto. This was on 3d May, and Lord Keith lost no time in sending on the news to the Commander-in-Chief, who was then on shore at Gibraltar; while he himself put his ships in order for meeting the enemy. He had only fifteen line-of-battle ships, most of them in a very unfit condition for engaging a powerful enemy. Two of his 98-gun ships, the Prince George and the Princess Royal, had been condemned by Lord St Vincent, who had vainly begged the Admiralty to replace them by others; and other two were equally defective, the "Hector patched up in the best manner our means

afford," Lord St Vincent wrote, "and the Namur caulked and vamped up." It was rather a hazardous undertaking to offer battle to a fleet like the Brest armament with such vessels, with the Spanish ships fully equipped and ready to stand out of the harbour and take part in the engagement.

The morning of the 4th May found Keith with his squadron drawn up in line of battle, with a north-westerly breeze favourable for the expected fleet. Shortly after eight o'clock the enemy appeared in sight, and the Majestic, which was nearest to them, hoisted signals for thirty-three ships. At the sight of the British the French wore on the larboard tack, and stood to the north-east, a movement which Lord Keith at once signalled to his fleet to follow. A gale shortly after sprang up, and the French bore away to the south-eastward, followed by the British; but the foul weather soon hid the former from view. Fortunately it blew so strong that none of the Spanish ships could put out from Cadiz, even if the Admiral had been disposed to venture. All night Lord Keith beat about off the bay in the middle of a heavy gale; and when morning dawned only four of the French fleet were visible, about six or seven miles to the windward, and these were presently lost. On the same evening twenty-six sail of the enemy's line were seen to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar with a favourable wind. For two days Lord Keith cruised about the coast, in the midst

of tempestuous weather, expecting that an attempt would be made on the part of the Spanish fleet to come out of Cadiz,—until, on the evening of the 9th, he received an express from Lord St Vincent, informing him that the Brest armament had entered the Mediterranean, and summoning him to Gibraltar, where he dropped anchor next morning, and joined the Commander-in-Chief.

Writing to Earl Spencer on the evening of the 10th, Lord St Vincent says: "Lord Keith has shown great manhood and ability before Cadiz; his position having been very critical, exposed to a hard gale of wind blowing directly on the shore, with an enemy of superior force to windward of him, and twenty-two ships of the line in the Bay of Cadiz, ready to profit by any disasters which might have befallen to him." Doubts have been raised whether the French really meant to raise the blockade of Cadiz at the risk of a battle, and whether the Mediterranean was not their immediate objective; but there can be little question that if the Spaniards had shown any disposition of putting out to join them, they would have hazarded an engagement with Lord Keith's small squadron, to which the combined forces would have been as four to one. Keith, however, was prepared to give battle to both fleets, even with his poorly manned and crazy ships; and it would not have been his fault had the results of the battle of Trafalgar not been anticipated by six

years. But the French seem to have been doubtful of the loyalty of their Spanish allies; the more so as they had shown themselves to the ships of war in Lagos harbour, which had not ventured to put out to join them; and the five Spanish ships of the line which had sailed from Ferrol missed the Brest fleet in the gale which had enabled the latter to elude Lord Keith.

When the French fleet was seen passing the Straits, the gallant old Commander-in-Chief forgot all about his ill-health, and made rapid preparations for giving chase. Unfortunately his messages to Lord Keith had been delayed by the weather; and when the fleet was able to sail on the morning of the 12th, Admiral Bruix had already six days' start. Lord St Vincent shifted his flag to the Ville de Paris; and he had sent expresses to warn Nelson and Sir Sidney Smith, and to order Commodore Duckworth to join the chasing fleet, which on weighing from Gibraltar numbered only sixteen sail of the line. And now began a pursuit, one of the most dubious and disappointing in which a British fleet had ever engaged in the narrow seas, and one whose unfortunate termination caused the conduct of all concerned in it to be severely criticised. It must, however, be remembered that Lord St Vincent's fleet was much too small for its widely spread duties; and that the ships of the chasing squadron were for the most part old and defective vessels. Lord

St Vincent, too, had warned Earl Spencer that he would be obliged to leave the Atlantic coast of the Peninsula open, as the possession of Minorca, which the French fleet might be expected to threaten, was of more consequence to us than the continuance of the Cadiz blockade.

The first object was to ascertain what direction the French fleet had taken; and now, as all through the chase, we have to notice the difficulty which the British had in obtaining information, compared with the facilities that Admiral Bruix apparently possessed for procuring early and reliable intelligence of the movements of his enemies. The British fleet was off Minorca on the 20th May, having seen nothing of the enemy on its way up the Mediterranean. On the 17th and 18th it had been overtaken by a severe gale of wind, which had also served to bring the Spanish fleet from Cadiz through the Straits, although eleven out of seventeen vessels were dismasted, and more or less wrecks when they reached Carthagena harbour. Finding Minorca undisturbed by the enemy, and having been joined by Commodore Duckworth with four 74-gun ships, Earl St Vincent sailed from Port Mahon for Toulon on the 22d with twenty sail of the line. On the way he received information that the Spanish fleet had entered the Mediterranean, and altering his course, he resolved to cruise off Cape St Sebastian, to prevent a junction between the French and the

Spaniards. On the 30th he learned that Admiral Bruix had again put out to sea from Toulon on the 27th. What the point of attack might be, it was impossible in the entire absence of reliable information to conjecture; and Lord St Vincent felt it necessary to detach Commodore Duckworth, with four of the best ships of the fleet, from his squadron, to warn, and, if necessary, assist Lord Nelson. Fortunately, on the same day as Commodore Duckworth sailed for Palermo, St Vincent was joined by Rear-Admiral Whitshed in the Queen Charlotte, with other four line-of-battle ships; and he continued to cruise between Barcelona and Cape St Sebastian, looking in vain for either enemy's fleet until the 2d June, when, finding his health entirely giving way, he made over the command to Lord Keith, and sailed for Port Mahon in the Ville de Paris. "Lord Keith," says James in his 'Naval History,' "took command of the fleet, now deprived of the use of the heaviest ship in it by her departure upon a service for which a frigate would have answered;" but Earl St Vincent must be acquitted of any intention to weaken the command of his successor. The mode of Lord St Vincent's return to Britain had given rise to sensitive discussions between himself and the Admiralty, and he had testily written to Mr Nepean a month or so before, "You have given no opinion, public or private, or rather no answer to my interrogatory,

whether I am to take my passage to England in the Ville de Paris, or go like a convict as I came out."

Lord Keith again cruised about, and looked into Toulon, coming so close that the foremost vessels of his fleet exchanged shots with the forts, and captured some small craft belonging to the enemy. The prisoners informed him that Admiral Bruix's fleet had taken an easterly course, and Lord Keith sailed in that direction, until he was informed on 5th June that the French fleet had been seen on the 4th in Vado Bay. His lordship again altered his course and sailed for Vado; but on the 8th he received despatches from the Commander-in-Chief, ordering him to repair to Rosas, to prevent a junction between the French and Spanish fleets, and at the same time to detach two of his 74-gun ships to the assistance of Lord Nelson. But for this fatal order there can be little doubt that Lord Keith would have succeeded in overtaking the French fleet and in bringing it to an engagement; but, strictly mindful of the obligations of discipline, he did not feel himself at liberty to override the instructions of his commander; and the evil consequences which sprang from his obedience on this occasion were afterwards urged by Nelson as an excuse for *his* neglecting the orders of Lord Keith himself when Commander-in-Chief.

Lord Keith, however, altered the course of his

instructions so far as to take Minorca on his way to Rosas, for the purpose of conferring with Lord St Vincent, of whose anxiety to surrender his command he was fully aware. The wind was unfavourable, and the fleet lost time by being becalmed. On the 13th Lord Keith and Rear-Admiral Whitshed exchanged vessels, and his lordship's flag flew from the Queen Charlotte during the remainder of the voyage, a precaution not unnecessary, for the crew had been deeply tainted with mutinous principles, and had been, in Lord St Vincent's phrase, "the root of all the evil" in the fleet. On the 15th June Lord St Vincent formally demitted the command-in-chief to Lord Keith. "Perceiving that a longer continuance in command," he wrote to Earl Spencer on that day, "would be injurious to his Majesty's service and unjust to Lord Keith, I determined to put him in immediate possession of it, in order to give full scope to his exertions, which I am sure will not disappoint his most sanguine friends."

Lord Keith resumed his cruise, and as he was rounding the eastern side of Minorca on a northerly course, his advanced ships, the Bellona, Centaur, and Captain, each of 74 guns, and the Emerald and Santa Teresa frigates, fell in with a flying squadron of the French, under Rear-Admiral Perrée, and brought it to an engagement. Perrée was on board the Junon, 38 guns, and had with him the Alceste

and Courageux, both of 36 guns, and two frigates, the Salamine and the Alerte. Admiral Perrée fought his ships stoutly, but the superior force of the British compelled him to strike his flag after a smart engagement. He and his sailors were made prisoners of war; while his ships, which were excellent vessels, were manned by Lord Keith, and added to the Mediterranean fleet.

The perplexing chase was again renewed. It was scarcely credible that so large and strongly appointed a fleet as that of Admiral Bruix should shrink from an engagement unless it had some special task to perform, while its mysterious movements completely baffled conjecture as to its actual aims. With Minorca to recover, and the French cause at Sicily and Malta to be strengthened, it was not to be supposed that they would continue long to hover about the Gulf of Lyons; but that, having refitted and victualled at Toulon, they would make for the east. Lord Keith accordingly cruised off Toulon until the 23d June, but seeing no appearance of the enemy, made for Genoa, only to find that the French had not been in Vado Bay since the beginning of the month. In fact the French fleet had followed close upon the British, and had joined the Spanish fleet in Carthagena harbour on the 23d, while Lord Keith was looking for them off Toulon.

Nothing is more surprising in the history of this pursuit, than the defective character of the intelli-

gence which the British fleet received of Admiral Bruix's movements. To explain this, we must remember that Lord Keith's fleet of nineteen sail of the line was small compared to the force of the enemy, and that he could not prudently detach vessels to watch the movements of the Frenchmen, while he was utterly unprovided with small craft, which he could employ as intelligence ships. From the hostile ports in the Gulfs of Lyons and Genoa no reliable information could be obtained; and the two fleets crossed and recrossed each other, without any consciousness on the British side of the proximity. Admiral Bruix, however, appears to have been all along possessed of Lord Keith's movements, and it is surprising that after his junction with the Spanish fleet he did not take advantage of the British departure for the Gulf of Genoa, to attempt something in the Mediterranean. The combined force, however, numbering forty sail of the line, sailed from Carthagena on the 24th, with the intention of passing the Straits of Gibraltar.

Lord Keith, baffled and disappointed, returned once more from the Gulf of Genoa to Minorca, to reassure himself of the safety of that island, and on the 7th July he was joined by a reinforcement of five 98-gun vessels and seven 74's, under Rear-Admirals Sir Charles Cotton and Collingwood, raising his command to thirty-one sail of the line. While watering at Port Mahon, he heard that the French and

Spaniards had united their fleets at Carthagena. He instantly hurried off for the Straits, leaving a few vessels to protect Minorca, and sending an express to Nelson, to detach a part of his fleet from Palermo, for the protection of Port Mahon. Collingwood, writing from Mahon on 11th July, says: "In the meantime the French go where they please, and we take care of Minorca. They are now with the Spaniards at Carthagena, and if you hear of their arrival at Brest you need not be surprised."

It was not until the 29th July that Lord Keith's fleet reached Gibraltar, to find that the enemy had passed the Straits three weeks previously. His lordship still continued the pursuit, hoping he might yet either blockade the combined fleet in Cadiz, where they had lain down to the 20th July, or possibly bring them to a general action. On the 30th, Lord Keith, having learned before sailing that the combined fleets had left Cadiz on a northerly course, steered for the Channel, but heard nothing of the enemy until he was off Finisterre, where he received information that they were two days' sail in front of him. All sail was crowded, and the fleet arrived off Ushant on the 12th August, without having obtained a view of the enemy; and when, two days after, Lord Keith despatched Sir Edward Pellew to look into Brest, the French and Spanish fleets were found to be safely at anchor, having entered the roads only the previous day.

Thus ended a most disappointing cruise, during which Keith's good fortune seemed to have deserted him, and which damped the spirits of the whole British fleet. Collingwood, who had accompanied Lord Keith in the Triumph, wrote to his wife: "We have had a most unfortunate voyage of it. In all reasonable expectation the French fleet ought not to have escaped us; and I had always hopes of our coming up with them until we sailed into Port Mahon, which is a very narrow harbour, from which you cannot get out without great difficulty. There we remained until the enemy had got so far the start that it was not possible to come up with them. We arrived at Brest the day after them, and finding them snug, came here (Torbay); at all which there has been great lamentation in the fleet."

Lord Keith had to submit to very severe criticism for the failure of this cruise; but adverse strictures were the more easily borne, that he was conscious of all having been done on his part that an officer could do, to overtake the enemy and bring him to an engagement. Standing between the French and Spanish fleets in Cadiz Roads, he had offered battle to both with a small and crazy squadron. At the beginning of the chase he had been embarrassed by the state of Lord St Vincent's health, which threw the executive duties of the Commander-in-Chiefship upon him without its discretionary powers of action. Lord St Vincent's order, in recalling Lord Keith from

the direct pursuit of the enemy on the 8th June, threw out the British fleet, which was never again able to recover an equally advantageous position in the chase. The situation of Nelson at Naples also added to Lord Keith's difficulties. Wholly devoted as Nelson was to the Neapolitan cause, he strenuously resisted all proposals that he should withdraw for the protection of Minorca; and nothing but the prospect of taking part in a battle would have proved a strong enough inducement to lead him away from the vicinity of the Court of the Two Sicilies. Writing to Earl Spencer on 13th July, when the combined fleets were already outside the Mediterranean, Nelson says: "Lord Keith writes me, if certain events take place, it may be necessary to draw down this squadron for the protection of Minorca. Should such an order come at this moment, it would be a cause for some consideration whether Minorca is to be risked or the two kingdoms of Sicily and Naples. I rather think my decision would be to risk the former." This was a point upon which Nelson apparently claimed a right to judge for himself. On the same day as this letter was written, but after it had been despatched, Lord Nelson received the following order from the Commander-in-Chief:—

"QUEEN CHARLOTTE, AT SEA, 27*th June* 1799.

"Events which have recently occurred render it necessary that as great a force as can be collected

should be assembled near the island of Minorca; therefore, if your lordship has no detachment of the French squadron in the neighbourhood of Sicily, nor information of their having sent any force towards Egypt or Syria, you are hereby required and directed to send such ships as you can possibly spare, off the island of Minorca to wait my orders; and I will take care, so soon as the enemy's intentions shall be frustrated in that quarter, to strengthen your lordship as soon as possible. KEITH."

In reply to the Commander-in-Chief, Nelson returned the equivocal answer that "as soon as the safety of his Sicilian Majesty's dominions is secured, I shall not lose one moment in making the detachment you are pleased to order;" but the following letter to Earl Spencer, also dated on the 13th, places his intention to disobey the order beyond controversy. "You can easily conceive my feelings," writes Nelson, "at the order this day received from Lord Keith; . . . and more than ever is my mind made up that I will not part with a single ship. . . . I am fully aware of the act I have committed, but, sensible of my loyal intentions, I am prepared for any fate that may await my disobedience. . . . Do not think, my dear lord, that my opinion is formed from the arrangements of any one. *No;* be it good, or be it bad, it is all my own."

Happily no attempt was made on Minorca, al-

though the danger from the large Spanish force in the neighbouring island was very considerable. Lord Keith did not press the matter, beyond vindicating the claim his orders had to be obeyed; and the Admiralty allowed Nelson to escape with a mild reproof, and an intimation from Mr Nepean that "their lordships do not, from any information now before them, see sufficient reason to justify your having disobeyed the orders you had received from your commanding officer, or having left Minorca exposed to the risk of being attacked, without having any naval force to protect it." Gentle as the reproof was, Nelson winced under it, and after the news arrived that the French fleet had finally escaped into Brest harbour, he observed: "My conduct is measured by the Admiralty by the narrow rule of law, when I think it should have been done by that of common-sense. I restored a faithful ally by breach of orders —Lord Keith lost a fleet by obedience against his own sense. Yet the one is censured, the other must be approved."

Taking into consideration the drawback arising from the divided command at the commencement of the chase, the difficulty about exposing Minorca to the enemy, the slow ships of which the British fleet was so largely composed, and the difficulties of obtaining information, we can see no reason to allow reflections to rest upon Lord Keith for the loss of the French and Spanish fleets. He had, at all events,

frustrated the main object of Admiral Bruix's visit to the Mediterranean, whatever that may have been, for the enemy's fleet achieved nothing except the disembarkation of a handful of troops at Savona to recruit Moreau's force; and the union of the fleet was probably more of a gain than a loss to Great Britain, as one squadron would suffice to watch the two in Brest harbour. Although Keith's pursuit was much discussed, in the spirit of both party feeling and professional jealousy, the unanimous verdict of contemporary admirals was, that no more could have been done to overtake the combined fleets, and that their escape was due solely to ill luck and untoward circumstances. Mr John Colquhoun, the author of the 'Moor and the Loch,' tells a story on the authority of his uncle, one of Lord Keith's midshipmen, of this cruise, which speaks for the scarcity of victuals among the ships: "Fresh provisions being scarce in the fleet, the younger officers caught the 'millers,' as they dubbed the huge Norway rats fed among flour and meal sacks, and grilled them for supper. From such clean diet these rats made nice tender food. Lord Keith, when he heard of it, gave out an order that the disgusting practice must be put an end to. Soon after he dined at their mess, when 'devilled millers' were served up as young rabbits. His lordship partook of the savoury dish; but when he found out the trick, the thought of his rabbits produced the same effect on the 'old

salt' as a chopping sea probably would on a landsman."

When he had fairly seen the French and Spanish fleets shut inside Brest harbour, Lord Keith steered for Torbay, to victual and refit his fleet, and dropped anchor there on 17th August.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BURNING OF THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE.

1799–1800.

Lord Keith remained in England from the middle of August 1799 to the middle of November, when he was again ordered back to resume the chief command in the Mediterranean, which Lord Nelson had exercised during his absence. He weighed from Spithead on 20th November, with a convoy under his protection, and arrived at Gibraltar on 6th December. The situation in the Mediterranean had not undergone much change during two months he had been away. Lord Nelson had been to Minorca, and finding no danger of an immediate attack, had returned to his favourite station of Palermo. Troubridge, in the Culloden, which was in such a frail state as to be scarcely able to put out to sea, was in command of a squadron blockading Malta. Sir Sidney Smith was in the Levant, co-operating with the Grand Vizier against General Kléber, whom Buonaparte had left behind him in command of the French in Egypt; and Ad-

miral Duckworth was cruising off Cadiz for the purpose, as Lord Keith's instructions ran, of "annoying the enemy, and for the protection of our commerce." Now that he was for a time freed from the danger of the great French fleet, Lord Keith began to consider how he could most effectually second the operations that were going on by land against the Republic. Genoa was now the only city in Italy which remained in the hands of the French, and Melas was then pressing the town with a strong body of Austrian troops. Lord Keith resolved to aid him by a strict blockade; and, after a few weeks of hurried preparations at Gibraltar, he arrived at Port Mahon on 4th January 1800. While on the point of leaving the Rock, he had received a copy of a despatch from Egypt to the French Government, which Captain Louis had been able to intercept, and which had directed his attention to the pressing necessity for taking early steps to extinguish French influence in the Levant. There was a prospect, too, of an attempt being made by Admiral Perrée, whom Lord Keith had captured in the Junon the previous summer, but who had since got his liberty by an exchange of prisoners, to sail from Toulon with a squadron to the assistance of Kléber. Lord Keith, with all these circumstances before him, impressed upon the Government the necessity of strengthening the fleet, and recommended the employment of a European military force against the

army of Egypt—a suggestion which the Cabinet resolved to adopt as soon as possible.

While at Minorca, Lord Keith received confirmation of his commission as Commander-in-Chief, under date of December 10, 1799, it having been arranged that Earl St Vincent was to succeed Lord Bridport in command of the Channel fleet; and secret instructions were at the same time put in his hands regarding the course he was to take with reference to the French in Egypt. In consequence of these, Keith postponed his intention of appearing before Genoa in person, and resolved to see whether an attempt by sea upon Malta was practicable; and if this, as he doubted, should be found impossible without troops, then he would approach either Egypt or Toulon with his line-of-battle ships, and endeavour to strike a blow at the enemy in one or other of these quarters.

Lord Nelson in the Foudroyant joined the Commander-in-Chief at Leghorn on 20th January, bringing with him information that the Russians, who had been aiding in the blockade, had quitted Malta and gone to Corfu. This event still further diminished the possibility of effective operations against that island, the possession of which was so essential to the power of the allies in the Mediterranean. The severe weather and mountain torrents prevented Lord Keith from informing himself accurately of the projects of General Melas, which, how-

ever, do not appear at that time to have been matured. His presence, notwithstanding, was required at Malta; and, having issued a public notification declaring the port of Genoa to be in a state of blockade, he sailed with Nelson for Palermo on the evening of the 24th January, and arrived off Sicily on 3d February. There he found, to his great disquietude, that the Russians had entirely withdrawn their forces from Malta, leaving the British force there, under the command of Governor Ball and Brigadier Graham, in a critical situation.

The possession of Malta was in Lord Keith's eyes an object not less important than our retention of Minorca. The one was the key of our position in the east, as the other was that in the west, of the Mediterranean. Malta was the half-way house between France and Egypt, and the Republican power in the Levant depended in a great measure upon their being able to hold Valetta. The disposable fleet at Lord Keith's command was, however, so small, and it was so imperative that he might be able to sail for any point of the Mediterranean where circumstances might unexpectedly demand his presence, that it was impossible for him to sit down and blockade any port that it might require time to reduce. Political expediencies, too, demanded that the efforts of the Austrians round Genoa should be seconded by our fleet; and Lord Keith was anxious that Lord Nelson should remove from Palermo and

the Neapolitan coast, and take the immediate conduct of the reduction of Malta; but the infatuation which kept the latter in the neighbourhood of the Sicilian Court continued to give an unfortunate colour to his views of naval policy at this time.

However, Keith himself sailed from Palermo on 11th February, and arrived off Malta on the 15th. On the way he was overtaken by Captain Louis in the Entreprenant cutter, with despatches from the Austrian General, Melas, enclosing a plan of the proposed campaign, which made Lord Keith more anxious than ever to return to the Gulf of Genoa, where he knew that his co-operation would be of material assistance to the movements on land. At Malta he heard of a French squadron having been seen off the west end of Sicily, designed, it was to be presumed, for Egypt; and this news, together with arrangements for strengthening the blockade of Malta, and for sending stores and provisions to Sir Sidney Smith in the Levant, delayed him longer off Valetta than he could have wished. Sir Sidney had been complaining, as all the other admirals were doing, of the deficiencies of his squadron; but Lord Keith informed the Admiralty that the vessels under his orders were the best equipped of the squadron, and that of course there could be no just cause of complaint to the Secretary of State. Lord Keith at the same time took the opportunity of settling another difficulty. Cap-

tain Troubridge had hoisted a broad pendant on the Culloden, an assumption of dignity which, although Nelson, his immediate superior, had taken no notice of the act, the Admiralty was disposed to resent. Lord Keith, however, took a liberal view of the matter. "As Sir Thomas has been most actively employed in this blockade," he had written to the Admiralty on 10th February, "which has been for a considerable time committed to his charge, and as he very deservedly stands high in the estimation of the inhabitants, as well as in that of the officers with whom he has been co-operating, I felt that to have made any alteration while the Culloden remains at anchor in Marsa Sirocco might have produced effects injurious to the public service by affecting in some degree the respectability in which he is held; but it is perfectly to be understood by him that his pendant is to be struck as soon as he proceeds to sea, and that he is to expect no additional pay in consequence of its having been kept flying."

The intelligence which he had received of the presence of a French squadron in his vicinity made Lord Keith keep his cruisers on the alert; and at the same time he maintained a strict guard on the entrance of Valetta harbour, as the only point in which the enemy could find security for disembarking their troops and stores. In a despatch, dated 20th February, Lord Keith gives the following

account of how the attempt of the enemy was frustrated:—

"The wind being strong from the S.E., and accompanied with rain, I could only communicate by signal. I accordingly denoted the bearing and the reputed force of the enemy, and directed the Foudroyant (Lord Nelson), Audacious, and Northumberland to chase to windward, and the Lion to look out of the passage between Gozo and Malta, while the Queen Charlotte was kept as close in within the mouth of the harbour as the batteries would admit of. The Alexander was at the same time under way on the S.E. side of the island.

"On the 16th I was joined by the Phaeton from Palermo, and the wind having shifted to the N.W., which afforded a favourable opportunity for landing the Neapolitan troops at Marsa Sirocco, I accordingly embraced it; and in the afternoon returned off the harbour of Valetta. Signals were made from various parts of the island of an enemy's fleet being in sight; and with the Queen Charlotte, Phaeton, Serena (Neapolitan frigate), and Minorca sloop, I anxiously continued to maintain a position near the shore, to prevent the enemy from passing within us, and to expose them to the attack of his Majesty's ships that were in pursuit of them.

"On the morning of the 19th the El Corso joined with a large French armed store-ship, which she took possession of at four o'clock in the afternoon of the

18th, by signal from Lord Nelson, whose squadron was then engaged with the French. Captain Ricketts reported this ship to be the Ville de Marseilles, loaded with salt meat, brandy, wine, clothing, stores, &c. &c. She sailed from Toulon on the 7th instant, in company with the Genereux, 74 guns, Badine, 24 guns, and two corvettes, having nearly 4000 troops on board for the relief of Malta. At 4 A.M. the Foudroyant and the Audacious joined me, and I was acquainted by Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson that the Genereux had surrendered without any action, and that the three corvettes[1] had escaped, from all the line-of-battle ships having been anxiously pressed near the French Admiral.

"I have the honour to enclose a copy of Lord Nelson's letter. His lordship has on this occasion, as on all others, conducted himself with skill and great address in comprehending my signals, which the state of the weather led me greatly to suspect. Captain Peard has evinced excellent management, from the moment he first discovered the enemy off the S.W. end of Sicily until the period of their capture; and Lieutenant William Harrington, commanding the Alexander in the absence of Captain Ball, has shown great merit in so ably conducting that ship in presence of so superior a force, previously to the appearance of Lord Nelson."

This cutting off of the attempt to relieve Malta was

[1] Badine, 24, Sans Pareil, 18, and Favourite, 18 guns.

of the utmost consequence, not only to the success of the blockade of the island, but also to the operations in the Levant. Lord Keith could now return to Genoa with a feeling of greater security; and the reported intention of the Brest fleet to again put out to sea, compelled him to hurry his preparations. The Genereux prize was speedily converted into a British ship of war; and the Admiral had arrived at Syracuse by the 1st March, where he was detained for two days by despatches from Egypt of a perplexing character, to which we shall allude more fully hereafter. He reached Leghorn Roads on 12th March, and at once issued a second notification, enforcing a more strict blockade of Genoa than the fleet had hitherto been able to maintain, and issuing a proclamation declaring the ports of Marseilles, Toulon, and Nice, and the west of the Riviera, to be on the same footing.

Lord Keith found the situation in Liguria full of promise for the cause of the allies. Massena, who had replaced Championnet in command of the army of Liguria, occupied a line from Genoa to the Col di Tenda with 36,000 men, of whom not more than 30,000 were disposable for beating back Melas, who had upwards of 90,000 men in Northern Italy available for active operations. Napoleon, who placed great store upon the possession of Genoa, as the sole stronghold of Republicanism in Italy, and as the main defence of the south of France from invasion,

had cautioned Massena to keep his troops well round Genoa, and to cut off the Austrian columns as they debouched singly from the mountain-passes. Massena's position was, however, full of danger, for the narrow line of country held by him would not provision even his small force; and now that Lord Keith had arrived, the prospect of occasional supplies by sea was greatly diminished. Between Melas and the British Admiral the utmost confidence subsisted, and the latter was frankly taken into the whole of the Austrian plans. When the spring was further advanced there was good hope that Melas would be able to force Genoa to capitulate, or to sweep Massena along the Riviera; but before the campaign began, a terrible disaster occurred to the Admiral, which cast a dark gloom over all the rest of the blockade.

The little rocky island of Capraja, lying off the north-east of Corsica, had been a source of great annoyance to the blockaders. A large number of light privateers had made it their headquarters, infesting the Genoese coast, plundering commerce, and occasionally succeeding in passing the blockade. On the 15th March a convoy with provisions for the French in Genoa had been compelled to run for Capraja, and Lord Keith thought the opportunity a fitting one for smoking out the nest of hornets. He accordingly despatched Captain Tod with his flag-ship the Queen Charlotte, the only

British vessel then at Leghorn, to sail round the island, and report upon the most suitable place for making an attack; while Lord Keith, with Stewart his flag-lieutenant, remained on shore, to make secret preparations for embarking troops. The Queen Charlotte weighed after nightfall from the roads, and lay at the back of the Mole waiting for two officers of General Melas's staff, Colonel de Best and Major l'Espine, who were to take part in the reconnaissance. The Austrians took boat at gun-fire, and had proceeded nearly half-way to the Queen Charlotte, when they discovered the vessel to be in flames, at a distance of ten or twelve miles from the Mole. The alarm was given on shore, and among the first to reach the Mole was Stewart, who by force compelled the crew of a tartan to put out for the burning ship. By the time he reached the Queen Charlotte the vessel was in a hopeless blaze. At the peril of his life, for he knew that the ship must speedily blow up, Stewart steered as close as he could compel the crew to go; while he by himself put off in a small boat, to save as many as possible of the doomed men, who were hanging by ropes from the sprit and yards. Duff, who was third lieutenant of the Queen Charlotte, and luckily one of those who escaped, thus describes the gallant conduct of his brother officer in after-years, when Stewart's arduous exertions in the service had brought a short but glorious and active career to its close:—

"To the active and intrepid conduct of that lamented ornament of the British navy, the major part of those who escaped owe their preservation. Stewart had been early in the morning informed of the dreadful situation of our noble ship. The burning of Troy could not have been a more tremendous or awful sight to Æneas. The ship was one blaze from stem to stern, with her guns going off in all directions from the flames. Lieutenant Stewart's heroic conduct was followed by two other boats; and to the honour of some American vessels who were at Leghorn, one was directly manned by three of their men; but too incautiously going alongside of the Queen Charlotte, she fell a sacrifice to the impetuosity of the unfortunate crew, who, urged by the flames, flocked in numbers for deliverance. She sank alongside with all on board.

"Lieutenant Stewart's ardour in the cause of humanity was only equalled by his judgment in affording us relief, when he had reached the Queen Charlotte, which lay at the distance of twelve miles from the shore. He judiciously dropped his tartan under the bows, where almost all the remaining crew had taken refuge. Little more than an hour had elapsed, after this assistance had been given, before the ship blew up. All that had been left unburnt immediately sunk down by the stern: but when the ponderous contents of the hold had been washed away by the waves, she, for an instant, recovered her buoyant property, and was suddenly seen to emerge almost her whole length from the deep; and then immediately turning over, she floated on the surface, with her burnished copper glistening in the sun. Amidst the various wonders of the deep

which are beheld by those who go down to the sea in ships, this certainly formed a most sublime and awful event. I had been roused from sleep by the going off of the guns, and had escaped from the surrounding flames, by jumping from the poop in order to swim to the launch that was astern, at that time full of men. I providentially reached the launch just as they were in the act of casting off the tow-rope; and after some entreaties and consultation, I was taken in, and had the happiness of being afterwards conducive to the preservation of several lives. I also witnessed, whilst in the launch, the exertions of the boats under the bows of the ship, directed by Lieutenant Stewart. We had only one oar and the rudder in the launch, and were consequently at the mercy of the wind and sea."[1]

Meanwhile Lord Keith had been alarmed; he had come down to the Mole in a state bordering on distraction, to see his noble flag-ship in flames, and his gallant officers and crew doomed to certain destruction. His despair was increased by the futility of his efforts to induce craft to put out to the assistance of the sailors, and he would have gone himself, had not his duty plainly pointed out that his post was on shore, and that he could be of more service to his men in endeavouring to procure relief, than if he went out to perish with them. He tried the Italian boats to put out as far as the ship, but in vain; he appealed to the authorities of

[1] Campbell's Naval History, viii. 319, 320. London: 1818.

the town, but even their influence failed to induce the sailors to approach a vessel that was every moment expected to blow up. Lord Keith had in his time faced many dangers, and undergone severe trials, but we can easily realise that on no occasion in his life did he pass through the same feelings of anguish as when he had to stand on the Mole of Leghorn and wait powerlessly for the moment when his burning ship would blow up. A few boats were, by dint of promises and threats, induced to put out. Two American captains with their crews promptly volunteered; the few officers who were on shore with the Admiral manned boats; but the succour was quite disproportioned to the emergency. In all 673 souls perished in the water or by the flames, while only 156 were saved from the burning wreck. Among those lost was the gallant Captain Tod, who had served with Keith in the Cape expedition and in the capture of the Dutch fleet, and who firmly did his duty to the last, having written a despatch to the Admiral, giving an account of the fire, and of the destruction of the ship, before he went down. The cause of the fire on the Queen Charlotte excited considerable alarm in the navy, as the ship had borne a very mutinous character, and had been one of those on which Lord Keith himself had quelled the elements of disaffection during the mutiny at Plymouth. Lord St Vincent had always been suspicious of her crew, but seemed to think that if she was

made Lord Keith's flag-ship the evil would be put under. Lord Keith himself, or any of his officers, had not the slightest suspicion of foul play. The clearest account of the discovery of the fire is that of John Baird the carpenter, which his lordship transmitted to the Admiralty:—

"Mr John Baird, carpenter of the Queen Charlotte, reports that, about twenty minutes after six o'clock yesterday morning, as he was dressing himself, he heard throughout the ship a general cry of fire, on which he immediately ran up the fore-ladder to get upon deck, and found the whole half-deck, the front bulkheads of the Admiral's cabin, the mainmast's coat, and the boats' covering on the booms, all in flames; which, from every report and probability, he apprehended was occasioned by some hay which was lying under the half-deck having been set on fire by a match in a tub which was usually kept there for signal-guns. The mainsail at this time was set, and almost instantly caught fire, the people not being able to come to the clue-garnets, on account of the flames. He immediately went on the forecastle, and found Lieutenant Dundas and the boatswain encouraging the people to get water to extinguish the fire. He applied to Mr Dundas, seeing no other officer on the fore-part of the ship (and being unable to see any on the quarter-deck, for the flames and smoke between them), to give his assistance to drown the lower decks

and secure the hatches, to prevent the fire falling down. Lieutenant Dundas accordingly went down himself, with as many people as he could prevail upon to follow him, and the lower-deck ports were opened, the scuppers plugged, the main and fore hatches secured, the cocks turned, and water drawn in at the ports, and the pumps kept going by the people who came down, as long as they could stand at them. He thinks that by these exertions the lower deck was kept free from fire, and the magazines preserved for a long time from danger; nor did Lieutenant Dundas or he quit this station, with all the people who could be prevailed to stay, till several of the middle-deck guns came through that deck. About nine o'clock Lieutenant Dundas and he, finding it impossible to remain any longer below, went out at the foremast lower-deck port, and got upon the forecastle, on which he apprehends there were then about 150 of the people drawing water, and throwing it as far aft as possible upon the fire. He continued there about an hour on the forecastle, and finding that all efforts to extinguish the flames were unavailing, he jumped from the jib-boom, and swam to an American boat approaching the ship, by which he was picked up and put into a tartan in the charge of Lieutenant Stewart, who had come off to the assistance of the ship."

Lord Keith's own view of the origin of the fire,

based upon his examination of all the survivors who could give any account of the first discovery of the flames, was that a small quantity of hay had been left loose under the half-deck, which was in charge of a sentinel, until it could be pressed, and that a spark from a lantern or match-tub had fallen amongst it during the night. The flames had not burst out until daylight; and when the men were drying the decks, those who were nearest to the fire immediately concluded that, as it was a small quantity, the best thing to do was to scatter it and pour water upon it; but the briskness of the wind and the dryness of the air drove the flames out of the port until they caught the mainsail, when the fire rapidly became unmanageable, and cut off all communication between fore and aft. From that moment the ship was irrecoverably lost. In spite of the efforts which Lord Keith's enemies in the Mediterranean made to connect the fire with a mutinous spirit in the Queen Charlotte, and to cast reflections upon the discipline of the ship, there can be no question that the disaster was due to accident; and if there be any blame, it attaches to the foolhardiness of the sailors who first saw the flames, without at once raising a general alarm.

This was the end of the Queen Charlotte, at that time, with the Royal George, the best vessel in the British navy. She had borne Lord Howe's flag on the 1st June, and had come out of action with-

out fore and main top-masts and yards, with her three masts much shattered, and her standing and running rigging hanging in ribbons; and in spite of the evil notoriety which she had acquired in the mutiny year, the command of her was one of the coveted prizes of the service. The British navy had sustained no such painful disaster since the time of George II., when in 1758 Admiral Broderick's flag-ship, the Prince George, had been burned off the Portuguese coast, Lord Keith's elder brother, Charles, being among those who perished; and the loss in that calamity was much inferior to the number of lives destroyed in the Queen Charlotte. The Admiral's orders from the Government, and his secret instructions regarding Lisbon, Malta, and Egypt, were all lost; and Lord Keith found himself at Leghorn without a ship of war, without instructions, without provisions or ammunition, and with the small remnant of his gallant crew, who had lost their all in the disaster. Seldom has ever a Commander-in-Chief been so suddenly plunged into so great a strait.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BLOCKADE OF GENOA.

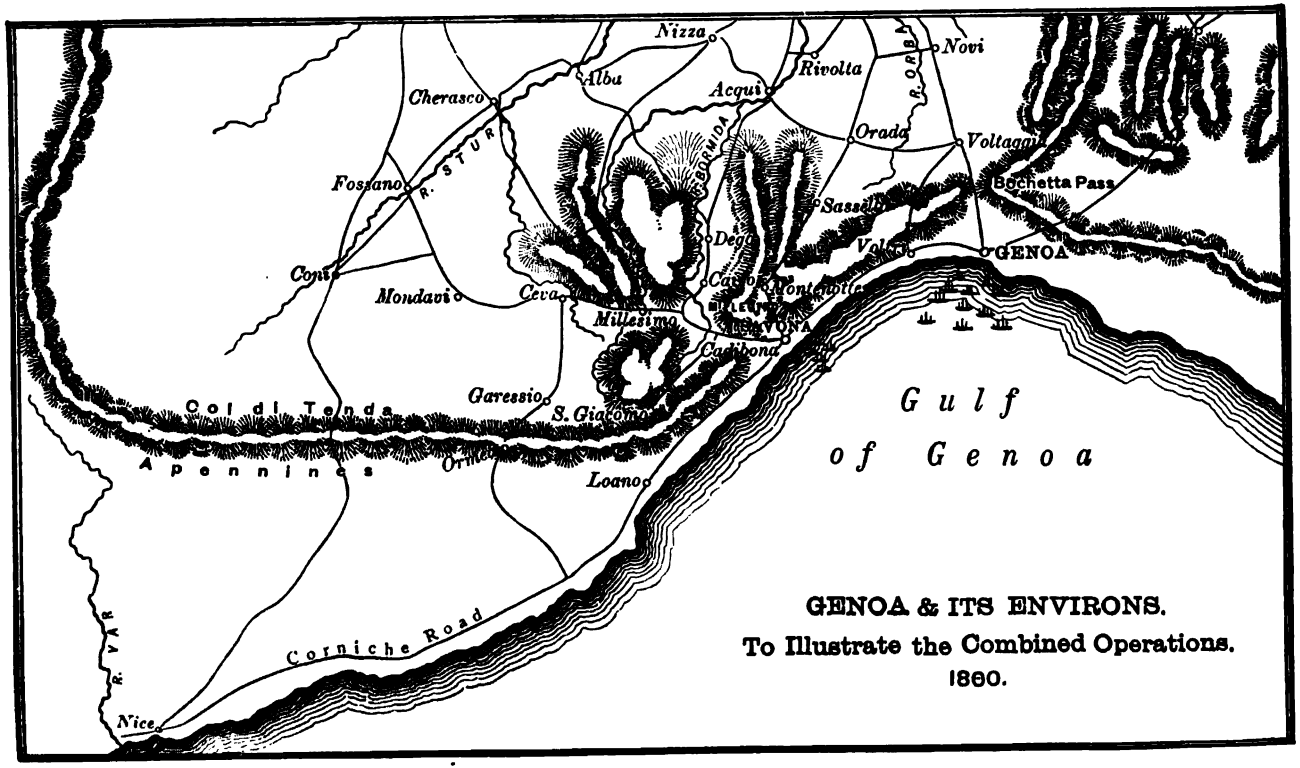
1800.

It was perhaps as well for Lord Keith that the exigencies of duty left him no time to sit down at Leghorn and brood over his loss. His first and most pressing task was to provide for the wants of his surviving crew, who had escaped literally naked from the Queen Charlotte, and for whom he had to purchase food and clothing, and provide quarters. He was greatly assisted by Mr Udney, the British consul, as well as by the authorities of the town and the hospitality of the inhabitants. His chief want was ships, for his blockading squadron was scattered along the coast as far as Toulon, and it was not till nearly a week after the fire that the Phœnix came in, and received Lord Keith's flag on board.

The time was now close at hand when the conjunct operations which had been agreed on between the Admiral and General Melas, and which had brought the former back from Malta to the Gulf of

Genoa, must be commenced. The winter, which had been unusually severe in the Apennines, was now giving place to a late spring, and Melas was taking the initiative by concentrating his scattered forces in the direction of Acqui, as a centre from which he would be able to fall with most effect upon the French army in the Riviera. It was not until April that the weather proved favourable for beginning hostilities. Zach, the chief of the Austrian staff, had drawn a plan of the campaign, the chief objects of which were the cutting off the army of Suchet in the centre from that of Soult, which covered Genoa to the west, and an assault upon the city itself by the Bochetta and by the Trebbia valley and Monte Bruno, while Lord Keith with his fleet was to attack the town by sea. The plan was one which even the penetration of Massena could not anticipate, for it involved risks at variance with the strategy which the Austrian commanders had hitherto shown in northern Italy; and Melas was able to strike a blow at the outset which the skill and determination of Massena and his lieutenants were not afterwards sufficient to retrieve.

On the eve of the attack Lord Keith was able to send Melas important information about the condition of the French lines to the west of Genoa and the Riviera. Captain Louis came into Leghorn with the Audacious, to which Lord Keith at once shifted his flag, towards the end of March, and his report



GENOA & ITS ENVIRONS.

To Illustrate the Combined Operations.

1860.

was that the coast was swarming with French troops, and bristling with cannon from Nice to Genoa. The fleet was even a better source of intelligence than the reconnaissances which the Austrians could with difficulty make by land; and throughout the operations that were to ensue, Lord Keith remained in constant communication with the Austrian headquarters. Baron d'Ott, who was intrusted with the duty of investing the city, was the general with whom Lord Keith had more immediately to co-operate; and a staff officer, Colonel de Best, from Melas's staff, was sent on board the Audacious to wait upon the Admiral.

On 5th April the Austrian attack was directed with great energy along the whole line of the French army. Melas, with 25,000 men, marched by Cadibona with the view of penetrating to the sea at Savona, and thus thrusting his army as a wedge between the forces of Suchet on the west and of Soult towards the city; while Elsnitz, aided by Knesewich, who had been detached from the Austrian centre, prepared to threaten Suchet's communications with the Var and France. Hohenzollern, with 10,000 men, advanced by the Bochetta; and Ott, with 15,000, by the valley of the Trebbia, to invest Genoa on the north-east and eastern sides. The French contested the advance step by step with desperate bravery, and were only forced to yield to the superior numbers, better appointments, and more

efficient condition of the Austrian soldiers. The 5th and 6th of April were marked by severe and general fighting along the whole line, the French falling back with great reluctance, and quitting each post only when they were driven from it by the bayonet. But by the evening of the latter day the Austrian advantage was undoubted. Melas had reached the coast, and cut off Suchet from Soult, compelling the latter after a desperate struggle to fall back towards Genoa, but not before he had victualled and strengthened the fortress of Savona. Hohenzollern successfully passed the Bochetta, and established himself on the hills overlooking Genoa to the north-east; while Ott's division assailed the fortifications on the eastern side, drove the Republicans within the walls, and took up a position for investing the city.

Meanwhile on the 2d, Lord Keith, with the Audacious, Cormorant, and Chameleon, sailed across from Leghorn to Vado, to co-operate with Melas in the struggle which was expected to take place with Soult's army when the Austrian centre reached the seaboard. As he passed Genoa he attacked the battery of Quinto, to draw the attention of the enemy to the town, from the assault which he observed the Imperialists were making on the eastern side. Observing that this diversion had produced a favourable effect, he next day opened fire upon the eastern part of the city, to aid an advance of

the Austrians on the right. This eastern quarter was believed to be disaffected to the French, and it was presumed that when the inhabitants found themselves exposed to the immediate perils of a siege, their indignation might hasten on the capitulation. On the same afternoon the little fleet was joined by the Minotaur, Mutine, and Salamine, the Imperial xebec, commanded by Major l'Espine, and the Strombolo, Neapolitan sloop, with a convoy of small vessels from Leghorn. The appearance of the increased naval force seemed to cause great uneasiness to the French on the hills and in the city. Next morning Lord Keith observed that on Monte Faccio, to the east of the city, the Austrians were apparently overpowered by numbers, and obliged to give way. Massena had directed a desperate attack for the recovery of this lost position, with such success that the Imperialists were driven from all the passes in that direction, with a large loss in killed and 1500 prisoners. Lord Keith would have made a diversion by sea as before, but while the action was going on he heard the constant roar of cannon, and saw that a heavy fire was being maintained in the neighbourhood of Savona. The success of Melas's design was of more importance than the possession of Monte Faccio and the eastern heights, as it was the cardinal point of the Austrian plan; and Lord Keith resolved to make for Savona with all the speed he might. It was,

however, almost a dead calm, and little progress had been made before a boat reached him, about 10 o'clock in the evening, with an officer from General Melas, informing his lordship of the complete success of his plans, and begging the attendance of the squadron. Leaving Captain Louis in the Minotaur to guard the port of Genoa, and the El Corso at Porto Finio to protect Ott's magazines, Lord Keith at once hastened towards Melas, and anchored in Vado Bay early on the 8th April. Here he received news that Gottesheim, of Ott's corps, had been compelled to fall back from the heights over Nervi, but that Ott himself had managed to hold Torriglia, a post most essential for the investment of Genoa. On the 10th the Admiral received information of an expected attempt to throw a reinforcement by sea from the city into the fortress of Savona by night; but the current carried the French vessels beyond Cape Delle Melle, and Lord Keith was able to harass their rear, and effectually foil the project. While he was busied in securing Vado as a safe harbour for the transports, in clearing the guns which the French had spiked and left behind them in the batteries, and in embarking Austrian cannon and artillerymen for Voltri, from which the road was passable for Genoa, Lord Keith received a visit from General Melas; and the two commanders discussed the prospects of the campaign with great frankness and hope of a success-

ful issue, and parted, each expressing himself highly satisfied with, and full of reliance upon, the other's zeal and ability. The events of the following days are rapidly described in Lord Keith's journal:—

"11*th April.*—The enemy were last night dislodged between Cella and Arbisola with great loss. The Austrians have lost 250 killed and wounded. The General informs me that the Entreprenant cutter, with the armed launches and boats, produced the most happy effect during the attack and retreat. Massena was nearly taken. The Bochetta has been carried by the superior valour of the Austrian troops; but in the west, part of the troops under Lieutenant-General Elsnitz have been obliged to abandon Finale. That officer, however, holds his post on St Giacomo, which renders Finale of no importance.

"12*th.*—The Austrians carried the port of Veruggio last night, after a hard-fought battle. The small vessels were of great use in this affair. The French are all drawn up near St Pierre d'Arena, the Austrians at Voltri.

"13*th.*—I have a letter from General Melas, informing me that his centre and left have been beaten near St Giacomo; that to furnish fresh troops he was obliged to march towards Monte Notte, which is over Savona; and requesting me to embark certain stores, &c. Last night I sent a boat to Nervi, to acquaint General d'Ott of the Commander-in-Chief's

situation. The French advanced towards Voltri; the gunboats continued to fire on them when their road lay near the sea."

The conjunct operations had thus been completely successful, although at the cost of a heavy expenditure of men on the part of the Austrians. Suchet was altogether cut off from being able to assist in raising the siege of the city; and the sorties which Massena had directed, though they sufficed for the time to keep the enemy at bay, and to maintain the spirit of the garrison, which was rapidly failing before the prospect of famine, had little effect upon the plans of the Austrians, who drew closer and closer round the doomed town. Massena's only hope rested in the more accurate information which he had of the First Consul's intentions; and if he could only hold out until the arrival of the French in northern Italy, he might entertain good hopes of Melas being compelled to raise the siege, to protect his communications. Melas, on his part, was not without dread of some interruption of the kind, and about the middle of April he determined to press upon Genoa with all his power. On the 15th, Hohenzollern threatened to cut off Soult from Genoa, and compelled him to fall back upon Voltri; and on the same day Massena, attacked by Latterman, and finding his retreat upon Genoa menaced by Hohenzollern, joined his division to that of Soult. In the course of the next five days both generals were compelled

to retire within the defences of the city. The naval side of the operations is thus described in Lord Keith's journal:—

"18*th April.*— . . . I was this day carried off Vado by light airs and a heavy swell.

"19*th.*—A boat came in to me from General Melas, with information of a signal victory having been obtained at Voltri last evening; and requesting his cannon and provisions to be landed for the army. He adds the French lost many men, and retired to Genoa. It was obstinately fought, and the boats of the fleet turned the day, by driving the enemy out of Voltri. It unfortunately happened—and for the first time since my arrival on the coast—that a calm and great swell from the eastward, and a strong current, had carried all the large ships from their appointed station on the settled plan for a conjunct operation, otherwise the affair had been more easily achieved.

"20*th.*—Calm, and a strong current still continued; but the ships of the squadron had it in their power yesterday to supply the castle of Finale with provisions. The garrison has been reduced to two days' food, but in accomplishing this service the ships were obliged to fire on the town, where the enemy had lodged themselves in considerable force. The field-train of the Austrians has been sent on shore to-day in the boats to Voltri.

"21*st.* — Two Austrian battalions have arrived from Especia in the Phaeton and Princess Charlotte,

but the calm still continues, and I have no communication from the shore."

From the 20th the siege of the city was carried on with vigour, but the field-works proceeded slowly, and famine, disease, and disaffection were aiding the allies better than they could help themselves. Lord Keith's task now began in earnest. Leaving Captain Downman, in the Santa Dorotea, 30-gun frigate, with the Neapolitan brig Strombolo, to assist the Austrians in the reduction of the important fortress of Savona, Lord Keith—who had shifted his flag to the Minotaur, Captain Louis, on the 14th April—crossed over to Genoa with his small fleet of frigates, gunboats, and sloops, and prepared to bombard the town. Lord Keith's journal continues its brief report of the naval operations :—

"22*d April*.—In consequence of light airs I was unable to approach the shore till the 23d, when I had some communication with a person in a public situation in the city, and replied by a flag of truce, being on the side of Monte Faccio.

"24*th*.—This morning there was an attack on the side of the suburbs of St Pierre d'Arena. The French were driven into Genoa. The Austrian artillery and troops were landed from the ships at Sestri di Ponente. As there was little wind, anchored to the west of the lighthouse. Rowed guard all night. The enemy fired from the walls. Lieutenant Jackson, with the Chameleon, cutter, and launches, lying

close to the shore. Sent two ships to cruise off Capraja, having obtained information that Massena had sent there for provisions. I observed the enemy breaking new ground on the heights, and apprehended that they intend defending the communication between Dui Fratelli and Diamante. The American consul, with whom I had a communication on 23d, came on board, with the consent of General Massena and knowledge of the principal inhabitants. An officer from the shore came to inform me that the affair of yesterday has gone in favour of the Austrians. General Gottesheim had repulsed the French on their attacks on Monte Faccio and Recco. Unspiked the cannon at St André, and sent ammunition to supply them.

"25*th*.—Hard gale and rain all day—slipped and put to sea.

"27*th*.—Light airs from the east, and dark weather. Ships not collected at 3 P.M. A heavy fire of cannon and musketry at St Pierre d'Arena, which continued two hours. Sent a boat to inquire, and made the signal for armed launches to attend. The French were repulsed with loss.

"28*th*.—A letter from General Melas that he has marched to the west, to attack Suchet's positions at Settapane over Finale, and requesting ships to flank his march.

"29*th*.—General d'Ott communicates his intention to make a general attack on all sides of Genoa,

and requests co-operation and a settlement of the plan.

"30*th*.—At 3 A.M. the attack began on the part of General d'Ott by signals from St Pierre d'Arena, on Quarto, St Martino, and Sta Christina by General Gottesheim, who pressed the enemy up to the walls near the shore, under cover of the fire from the Phœnix, Mondovi, Entreprenant, Victoire tender, launches, and boats of the squadron. The affair continued until night, when the Austrians retired, being unable to dislodge the enemy from the little fort of St Martino, situated on a hill two miles from the sea. General d'Ott was most successful in seizing Dui Fratelli by escalade and blocking up Diamante. On the side of San Martino the French durst not follow the Austrians, in consequence of the well-directed fire of the squadron. It rained the whole day. Shells from the town fell among the ships. The French, however, on the same evening repossessed themselves of all their former posts. It is reported they lost many men—as many as 1500.

"*May* 2*d*.—The enemy made a desperate sortie on Lieutenant General d'Ott's centre at Sestri. They kept advancing in column to the muzzles of the cannon repeatedly for an hour, and did not retire until they lost 1200 men, of whom 20 officers and 280 men are prisoners."

Melas's expedition against Suchet, which quickly resulted in the French being driven over the Var,

with the loss of 1500 men killed and wounded, and an equal number of prisoners, was in strict accordance with the Austrian strategical plan; but it helped to protract the siege, for Ott was left with only 25,000 men to invest the city; and Massena, rendered desperate, redoubled his efforts to drive the Austrians back from their advanced position. Soult succeeded in again capturing the Dui Fratelli and Fort Diamante, killing 3000 of the Imperialists, and taking 1800 prisoners. The only position of consequence on the eastern side left to the Imperialists was Monte Faccio. Massena, less fortunate, failed to carry the works on Coronata, and had to fall back on Genoa, with a heavy loss. The French successes were, however, of little consequence, compared with the horrors which famine was now beginning to work within the walls. Lord Keith's blockade had been unremittingly kept up, and though provisions were exhausted, there was no sign of Massena, who was hoping still for news of the First Consul, yielding to the cries of the starving inhabitants. "He will make us eat our boots before he surrenders," the French soldiers grimly said—a prediction which was literally fulfilled. We now resume Lord Keith's journal:—

"3*d May*.—On the application of General Melas, I received from General Massena 124 wounded Austrian prisoners, who were forwarded by me to the hospitals at Chiavari. On this day nothing remarkable occurred, and the weather being moderate the Minotaur

was anchored, for the purpose of recovering her anchor and cable, left behind on the 25th ult., which was accordingly done.

"*4th.*—I received a letter from the General, informing me that the French had retired to San Espirito, and had sustained a considerable loss on the 2d at Louno. He says he was much indebted to the fire of the Phaeton, &c., and to the good management of Captain Morris. By desire of General Melas, sent a flag of truce to Genoa, with thirty-five non-combatants taken at Finale, who were returned by General Massena, who could not receive 'useless mouths' into the city in the condition in which he found himself.

"*7th.*—Two mortar-boats and two gunboats arrived from Naples. Heard from General Melas that the French had burned their magazines at Alassio and had retired to Port Maurice, and that Captain Morris had seized twenty corn vessels and a depot of arms, and galled the enemy's rear through several miles of their retreat. Two of Massena's staff were taken in a small boat near Albenga, in attempting to escape from Genoa, supposed to be charged with special commissions.

"*8th.*—Heard that the enemy were at Vintimiglia. The town was this morning fired upon from the sea by the gun and mortar boats, launches, &c., and a 2-gun battery at St Pierre d'Arena was dismantled. In the afternoon received a letter by a fishing-boat

from a correspondent in the city, saying that they must soon know their fate, for although the General seemed resolved to defend himself, the want of provisions would in a few days bring them to a *dénouement*. He said nothing further on politics than that they were '*dans l'eau bouillante*,' and that what occasioned the greatest anxiety was the rapid progress of an epidemic disease which increased daily.

"9*th*.—The gun and mortar boats, as last night, bombarded the town from an early hour till after daylight, within pistol-shot, and fortunately without loss, although the musketry from the shore passed over them. Few cannon were fired from the town, which must have been owing either to their having been unable to bring them to bear, or to scarcity of ammunition.

"10*th*.—The enemy marched out their whole force against General Gottesheim, and dislodged him from his position on Monte Faccio with considerable loss. Bad weather, rain, and great swell all this day and the following.

"12*th*.—South wind—great swell. Received letters from General Gottesheim, acquainting me that he had been obliged to retire to Recco, and that he is in want of reinforcement.

"13*th*.—The French marched against Hohenzollern with all their force. Made the signals. At mid-day the attack began. Rain, thunder, &c., prevents us seeing the result.

"14*th*.—Informed by General d'Ott that the enemy were repulsed with great loss in the affair of yesterday, and that General Soult, second in command to Massena, had been taken. Wind south—great swell. Heard of Berthier's advance towards Piedmont, and that General Melas had marched in that direction. The American consul came on board. He informed me that the people were clamorous; that, besides Soult, General Hospital was killed, and Gauthier wounded, with 53 officers. The French were supposed to have lost 2000 men."

At sunset on the 15th the fortress of Savona surrendered to famine, and Major-General Buget and 800 men were made prisoners by Count St Julien, the Imperial Commissary. In the negotiations for the capitulation, Captain Downman of the Santa Dorotea, to whose rigorous blockade the surrender of the fort was really due, was overlooked by St Julien; and it became necessary for Lord Keith to vindicate the position of the British navy in the conjunct operations. Before the opening of the campaign he had come to a distinct explanation as to the equal footing on which the British stood with the Austrians, with respect to negotiation as well as to booty; but Melas was absent, and he had some difficulty in getting Ott and St Julien to recognise the British claims. Keith, however, was not in the habit of yielding his point, where the honour of the country and the interests of the navy were concerned; and after a rapid but

voluminous correspondence, he succeeded in having Captain Downman made a party to the capitulation, and in obtaining an apology from St Julien. Savona had throughout the operations been a great danger to the Austrian position; and though the provisions were exhausted, it was well supplied with ammunition. Two hundred and forty large iron and brass guns, 200 quintals of powder, 120,000 cartridges, and a large quantity of ordnance stores, were captured in it by the allies.

Operations were now at end by land. Massena felt the hopelessness of further sorties, and doggedly awaited his fate, knowing that every day he was able to hold out was of incalculable gain to the First Consul. The reduced forces of the Austrians on their side were content to let famine do the work, and they did not press the town with over-ardour. Lord Keith, however, maintained the bombardment by sea, whenever the weather permitted the gunboats to be brought to bear upon the town. The boats were able to keep up such a smart fire, and so gall the town and shipping, that the French resolved to make an effort to board them the first opportunity. The Admiral received private warning of this intention, and was on his guard. On the afternoon of the 20th, a very large galley rowed by slaves, accompanied by a small flotilla, appeared off the Mole-head and exchanged shots with the squadron, retiring at nightfall to moor under the guns of the moles and the

city bastions, on which evident preparations were made for a determined resistance. Lord Keith, nevertheless, resolved to bombard the town by night, as on former occasions, and sent out Captain Beaver with the boats about 9 o'clock. About 1 A.M. on the following morning, a brisk cannonade was opened on the city, and on the boats moored off the Mole-head. Captain Beaver by the flashes having been able to determine the position of the latter, gallantly resolved upon making an effort to cut them out. With a detachment of the ships' boats he steered to the large Prima galley, which had made itself so conspicuous on the previous day, and in spite of the obstacle which its beak and sweeps presented to the approach of boats, and the heavy fire on all hands, boarded it, and carried the vessel at the point of the cutlass. The majority of the French escaped to the other vessels; and Captain Beaver, after making some prisoners, and having cut the moorings, ordered the slaves to row for the squadron. They obeyed, and the vessel was soon brought out from under the guns, while the bombardment from the British boats went on almost without any abatement. Captain Beaver's gallant deed was warmly eulogised by Lord Keith in his despatch to the Admiralty. The slaves on board, composed of Genoese criminals, were sent on shore, and Massena, who had no need for more "useless mouths," is reported to have massacred the whole of them indiscriminately—an act of brutality

for which the British, who had no means of bestowing so large a number of criminals, were in no way responsible.

Inside the city there were horrors to which we must go back to the siege of Damascus by the Saracens in the year 633 A.D., to find an equally painful parallel. The people were dying in every quarter from sheer starvation; the most loathsome garbage was devoured to allay the pangs of hunger; the closest ties of nature were burst, mothers deserting their children, sons abandoning their aged parents to starvation; suicide was hailed as the readiest means of relief; and the general pestilence which swept about the city was looked on as a merciful visitation of Providence. French writers who are disposed to exaggerate the desperation of Massena's defence, tell ghastly stories of how the people were driven to eat the flesh of their dead fellow-creatures; but too much credence is not to be attached to their statements. The fact, however, that 20,000 of the townspeople perished of famine and pestilence during the siege, requires no additional embellishments to attest the terrible ordeal through which the city had to pass. When on the point of surrendering, despatches reached Massena from Buonaparte, which induced him to hold out a few days longer. Captain Franchesci, who brought them, had endeavoured to steal through the British squadron in an open boat during the night; but day dawned

before he reached Genoa, and the gallant officer, taking his sword in his teeth, leaped into the sea and reached the Mole in safety. He had to tell Massena that the First Consul had started in person to take command of the army in northern Italy.

The notices of the concluding days of the siege in Lord Keith's journal are written with characteristic brevity :—

"29*th May*.—Massena made a sortie, but was defeated with loss.

"30*th*.—The French made a parade, as if they meant an attack. A great number of deserters come in every day.

"*June* 1*st*.—Heard that General Elsnitz had abandoned Nice, by orders from General Melas. At 6 P.M. Massena sent off offer of a negotiation, which I accepted. At eleven received a letter from Count St Julien, acquainting me that orders had been received to evacuate the Genoese, in consequence of the French having appeared in the Duchy of Milan.

"2*d*.—Colonel de Best and Captain Beaver met General Andrieu, and having arranged many articles, leaving others to be settled by General d'Ott and myself, and adjourned till five next morning. Captain Beaver received fresh instructions, and attended on the 3d, when the negotiation was renewed, and ended in a desire on the part of General Massena to meet Lieutenant-General d'Ott and myself between the advanced posts on the ensuing morning.

"*4th.*—The interview accordingly took place, and like the others was long and violent; but at last ended in the articles of capitulation being signed."

Genoa had thus fallen at last, but the victory remained rather with Massena than with the allies. The French General could conjecture that he had given Buonaparte sufficient time to concentrate the Army of Reserve in Piedmont, and that the arrival of the First Consul would in all probability turn the tables. Neither Lord Keith nor Ott could know the French plans, or they would not have granted Massena such favourable terms. But the Imperialists were equally anxious with Massena to put an end to the siege. On 19th May Melas had been induced to turn back from the Var upon Turin, by not very definite information of a French inroad upon his communications; and when he heard of Buonaparte's passage of the St Bernard, and learned the strength of the force to which he would be opposed, he at once sent an express to Ott to raise the siege of Genoa, and join him with all speed at Alexandria. This message, which did not fully explain the grounds of Melas's apprehensions, did not reach the investing army until after Massena had proposed to capitulate; and the Austrian General took counsel with Lord Keith as to what he should do. The views of both commanders unanimously pointed to urging the negotiations to a close; and the neces-

sity for haste naturally made them less exacting with Massena than they otherwise would have been.

In the personal interview between Massena and the allied commanders, the former was ostentatiously polite to Lord Keith, and contemptuous towards Ott and St Julien. "My lord," he said to the former, "were France and England ever to come to an understanding, they would govern the world." When the allies insisted that Massena should yield himself a prisoner of war, he vehemently resisted the proposal, which he said must at once end the negotiation. "But, sir," said Lord Keith, "you, from what we have experienced of your valour and ability, are worth 20,000 men." The capitulation was however arranged; and on the 5th June, the garrison, with Massena at their head, marched out with the honours of war—8000 starved and sickly soldiers, the poor remains of the splendid garrison—and set out to join Suchet, who, already freed from the pressure of Elsnitz, was marching back in the direction of Genoa. Hohenzollern at once garrisoned the town, and Lord Keith entered the harbour with his flag-ship and two other war-vessels; but the occupation was destined to come to an abrupt termination. On the same day as the capitulation was signed, Buonaparte entered Milan; and a week later the First Consul had completely routed the Austrian army on the field of Marengo. The armistice of Alexandria, which followed in a few

days, restored to the French the fortresses and cities of northern Italy.

The news of the convention came like a thunderclap upon Lord Keith, who had vainly been pressing on Lieutenant-General Fox to send some of the troops which were unemployed at Minorca to strengthen the garrison of Genoa. Suchet entered the town with such celerity that it was with difficulty Keith's flag-ship could be worked outside the Mole before the French had manned the batteries; and the Admiral had to stand across for Leghorn, bitterly regretting the misspent months that had been wasted in reducing a city which the enemy were to reoccupy within a few weeks.

Lord Keith sent Captain Beaver home with despatches, and with a statement of his casualties, which were very slight, considering the dangerous services the squadron had been engaged in—only 2 officers and 25 seamen wounded, and 15 sailors killed. His lordship also took the opportunity of acknowledging the services of the squadron in the following terms:—

"In justice to the officers who have been employed under my command for enforcing the blockade, I feel it incumbent upon me to say that Captain Louis of this ship (Minotaur) and the officers acting under his orders exerted themselves most creditably, notwithstanding the violence of the season, in cutting off supplies from the middle of January till my

arrival on the 5th April; and such has been the vigilance and attention with which his Majesty's squadron and the Neapolitan vessels have executed their duty since that time, that only one small vessel and two boats have been known to enter the harbour with supplies. The assistance which the ships as well as the boats have yielded to the Austrian troops acting on the coast, has been most warmly acknowledged by all the commanding officers,—especially that afforded on the western Riviera by Captain Morris of his Majesty's ship the Phaeton, and on the eastward by Captain Halsted of the Phœnix; and their lordships will do justice to the merits of Captain Beaver in believing that the bombardment, always intrusted to his direction, has been conducted with intrepidity and executed with effect."

A few days before quitting Genoa, Lord Keith wrote to Mr Nepean at the Admiralty, with feelings greatly depressed by the news of the Imperial reverses: "Greatly as I must lament the circumstances which have conduced to the occurrence of events so disastrous to the allies, it is in the midst of the misfortune a source of consolation to me to reflect that the officers and men acting under my authority have contributed, as far as it could depend upon them, to the promotion of the general interest; and that they have uniformly maintained the most perfect harmony and cordiality with the officers and troops of the Emperor when acting with them—a

circumstance which has consequently more particularly interested us in their fate, and disposed us to sympathetically participate in the disastrous events which have occurred. Should the future circumstances of the war require a continuance of co-operation on the part of his Majesty's fleet, I shall, independently of considerations of public duty, be well disposed, on receiving their lordships' commands to that effect, to grant that support which has been yielded with pleasure on our part, and received with acknowledgments on theirs."

While busied at the siege of Genoa, Lord Keith had been caused great anxiety by the conduct of other details of his command. The difficulties in Egypt we shall describe afterwards; but the Admiral was more immediately distressed by the state of affairs in Malta. Lord Nelson's health, if not the attractions of the Sicilian Court, would not admit of his attending to Lord Keith's wishes that he should press the reduction of Malta in person; and the Admiral naturally felt great delicacy in remonstrating in sufficiently strong terms with so distinguished an officer. The keen sensibility of Nelson had never got over Lord Keith's appointment to the command-in-chief in the Mediterranean; and it is unpleasant to read the free expression that both he and his friends gave to their feelings on this subject. Lord Keith, on his part, endeavoured to leave Nelson as independent as the strict letter of his duty

permitted him; and when the latter begged permission to resign his command on the score of ill-health, Keith endeavoured in the most kindly and flattering terms to induce him to reconsider his request. Nelson had convoyed the Queen of Naples, with the Hamiltons in her train as a matter of course, from Palermo to Leghorn; but before she could land the Austrian reverses had commenced, and it was unsafe for her Majesty to proceed, as she had intended, through Lombardy; and it seemed best that she should return to Palermo. Lord Keith in the critical state of affairs felt it necessary on 19th June to issue strict orders to Lord Nelson not to employ any of the line-of-battle ships in convoying the Queen back again; nor could he comply with Nelson's own request to take the Foudroyant home to England, with the Prince and Princess Castelcicala on board. With the orders he also sent the two following private letters:—

"Genoa, 19*th June* 1800.

"My dear Lord,—It is not matter of caprice, but of actual duty and necessity, which has obliged me to send the order, which I must desire to be final. Her Majesty is too just, and too well informed, to place anything like neglect to me. With her good understanding I am sure to stand acquitted. So, my dear friend, let me insist that the ships instantly follow my public orders. A frigate and all the

Neapolitans may attend the Queen if you think proper, and that perhaps may be at the expense of Sardinia.

"With every real respect, I am most affectionately yours, KEITH."

"GENOA, 19*th June* 1800.

"MY DEAR LORD, — The wretched situation to which we are reduced distracts me. I am told from England there is not a ship to be sent out. I am directed to undertake many distant important services which render it impossible to let the Foudroyant go to England. Her masts are made at Mahon. It is likewise impossible I should permit the Teresa to leave this station, if Acton does not go thither; and I could not consent to yielding a frigate to a lesser application than that of the King. I am surprised to hear that the Princess Charlotte is in a bad condition. I had understood otherwise. Now, my dear lord, I think for the accommodation of those I love who are with you, they should get to Mahon instantly (where I shall soon be going), and there the Sea-horse is hourly expected with Sir R. Bickerton. The ship is instantly to return, and is of course at their command. Besides this, there are many excellent troop-ships, and two store-ships at the same place, now under orders. Any of them shall be directed to take in what may be required. As to yourself, the Princess Charlotte will take

you, provided you persist in going home, of which I hope your health does not stand in need. Troubridge was at Mahon, came here, and is returned to that fort. He is quite content with the Culloden. If the Alexander is not gone to St Especia, she may return to Malta immediately, until the Theseus can get there. Tell Madame Castelcicala and the Prince if they go to Mahon I will direct a store or troop ship for them. God knows, I wish more was in my power for you all; but really the late unfortunate events make me tremble for all Italy. You know there is a great force at Mahon, but no general; and I have been refused a single man, as usual. I am, with duty to the Queen, and sincere regard to our friends, most assuredly yours, KEITH."

Lord Keith found Nelson and the Queen of Naples at Leghorn on his arrival there, but on July 8th the Queen became alarmed at the temper shown by the population of the town, and crossed Italy to Ancona, Lord Nelson and the Hamiltons following her. Thence the party proceeded to Vienna, and Nelson reached England in the month of November, and immediately placed his services at the disposal of the Admiralty. No commander had a higher opinion of Nelson's bravery and capacity as a seaman than Lord Keith entertained; and his notices of the former in his public and private correspondence con-

trast very favourably with the references to Lord Keith in Nelson's own letters — references which must be ascribed to his sensitive and impetuous feelings, and not to any wish to seriously disparage his Commander-in-Chief. Lord Keith was not alone in perceiving that Lord Nelson's unfortunate connection with the Hamiltons was crippling the operations of the fleet at Malta and in the Levant, and subordinating the interests of Britain to those of the most insignificant and worthless Court in the south of Europe. Writing from the Admiralty to Nelson, on 9th May, Earl Spencer, after expressing his regret that Lord Nelson's health would not permit of his completing the reduction of Malta, goes on to say: "I am quite clear, and I believe I am joined in opinion by all your friends here, that you will be more likely to recover your health and strength in England than in an inactive situation at a foreign Court, however pleasing the respect and gratitude shown to you for your services may be; and no testimonies of respect and gratitude from that Court to you can be, I am convinced, too great for the very essential services you have rendered it." Though the best of British naval commanders on active service, Nelson was but a very indifferent lieutenant; and it was a matter of congratulation for the country when he quitted the Mediterranean, and found for his services a career where his bravery and genius were to win for him new and imperishable laurels.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CONVENTION OF EL ARISH.

1799–1800.

We must now go back in our narrative to give an account of affairs in Egypt, for which Lord Keith, from the time of his taking over the command in the Mediterranean, had to bear a responsibility that was both onerous and vexatious. When his lordship returned to the Mediterranean in December 1799 from the fruitless chase of Admiral Bruix, the condition of the French in Egypt had already become desperate. Buonaparte had returned to France in the preceding autumn, leaving Kléber in command, with promises of speedy reinforcement and assistance, which the one general knew would never be afforded, and the other was too wise to build upon. Buonaparte's dream of Eastern empire had been more speedily dissipated than is generally supposed. After the flush of his earlier successes, he became convinced that it was in Europe that his career must be shaped; and the reverses which the arms of the Republic had

sustained in his absence, and the waning influence of the Directory, made him impatient to get back to France. Even before the Syrian expedition, he had made overtures for a renewal of the alliance with the Porte on the basis of the French evacuation of Egypt; for early in the spring of 1799, Captain Troubridge succeeded in intercepting his envoy to the Grand Vizier, bearing propositions to that effect. At the time of his departure he left negotiations pending with the Grand Vizier, which Kléber, who took a very despondent view of the French situation, continued to conduct. The policy and correspondence of the French with regard to Egypt raise a strong presumption that Buonaparte's secret instructions to Kléber were to get out of Egypt as soon as he honourably could with his army, and to so comport himself as to make the Porte glad to get rid of the French on any terms.

The foresight of the British Cabinet, strengthened by the light which the intercepted correspondence had cast upon the French intentions, had led it to issue very strong injunctions against allowing the French to return home from Egypt. The private views of Lord Keith, as well as those of Lord Nelson, strongly concurred in the commands of the Government; and both were resolved to do their best to prevent a single Frenchman quitting the East, except as a prisoner of war. Unfortunately Sir Sidney Smith, who had charge of the naval opera-

tions against Egypt, did not share the opinions of his superior officers. By an unfortunate blunder of the Government, Sir Sidney Smith had been placed in a position which proved a source of weakness to the Mediterranean command. His brother, Mr Spencer Smith, was Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople; and Lord Grenville, thinking that it would be for the interest of the public service if two such able men were conjoined in the defence of the Porte, induced the Admiralty to send Sir Sidney out as Commodore in the Turkish waters, while he was also associated in a very irregular manner with Mr Spencer Smith in the conduct of affairs in the Embassy. Sir Sidney's instructions ran that he was "to take command of such of his Majesty's ships as he may happen to find in those seas, unless by any unforeseen accident it should happen that there should be among them any of his Majesty's officers of superior rank." This occurred in 1798, before Lord St Vincent had resigned, and both the Commander-in-Chief and Lord Nelson very warmly resented the irregular intervention of the Admiralty. The latter especially was annoyed, as it took the control of naval operations on the coast of Egypt out of his hands, and he threatened to resign, in consequence of the slight which he conceived himself to have received. Earl Spencer, when appealed to by Lord St Vincent, did indeed endeavour to make out that there had been no intention of making Sir Sidney Smith indepen-

dent of Nelson; but the mischief had been already done.

Sir Sidney's bearing at the outset did not tend to remove the prejudices which Nelson had conceived against him; and the mode in which his lordship comported himself towards the new Commodore is full of grim humour. He persists in recognising two different capacities in Sir Sidney, that of a joint-plenipotentiary, to whom his lordship is all submission and deference, and that of a captain serving under his own flag, to whom he lays down his orders with sternness and *hauteur*. Unfortunately the bearing of Sir Sidney Smith did not at the outset tend to diminish Lord Nelson's prejudices against him. He did not put off the diplomatist when he went on board his ship, and his correspondence bore the authority of a minister-plenipotentiary more than that of the captain of the Tigre; while he took upon himself the responsibility of permitting Frenchmen to return home from Egypt on his own passports, without reference to the views of either Keith or Nelson. It was not until Nelson had made the Commodore fully understand that he was serving under his flag, and when Sir Sidney's gallant conduct at the siege of Acre had excited Nelson's generous sympathy with bravery, that the correspondence between the two began to be carried on in a friendly tone. At last, however, the Government awakening to the mistake that had been made, and

anxious about the future of the French in the East, sent Lord Elgin out as ambassador to Constantinople a month or two before Lord Keith returned to the Mediterranean. Sir Sidney Smith, as well as his brother, had adopted the views prevalent at the Porte, that it would be advantageous to get the French out of Egypt, even at the expense of facilitating their departure; and in the negotiations to which he was admitted, he gave effect to his views in a manner which his position certainly did not authorise him to employ. Lord Keith left England fully possessed of the mind of the Government with regard to Egyptian affairs; and with definite instructions to reject any offer of capitulation that did not yield the French army as prisoners of war. When at Gibraltar in the last week of December, Lord Keith received an intercepted despatch of Kléber, showing that negotiations were on foot; and he heard at the same time that a naval force was being equipped at Toulon, the object of which, it was presumed, would be to succour the French in Egypt. On the 8th January, Lord Keith, while at Port Mahon, took the earliest opportunity of a vessel sailing to the East to inform both Lord Nelson and Sir Sidney Smith of the secret instructions which had been given him with respect to Egypt; and he also forwarded to Sir Sidney the following letter, addressed to General Kléber, "to be made use of if circumstances should so require:"

"On board his Majesty's Ship
the Queen Charlotte,
January 8, 1800.

"Sir,—I inform you that I have received positive orders from his Majesty not to consent to any capitulation with the French troops which you command in Egypt and Syria, at least unless they lay down their arms, surrender themselves prisoners of war, and deliver up all the ships and stores of the port of Alexandria to the Allied Powers.

"In the event of this capitulation, I cannot permit any of the troops to depart for France before they have been exchanged. I think it equally necessary to inform you, that all vessels having French troops on board and sailing from this with passports from others than those authorised to grant them, will be forced by the officers of the ships which I command to remain in Alexandria. In short, that ships which shall be met returning to Europe with passports granted in consequence of a particular capitulation with one of the Allied Powers, will be retained as prizes, and all individuals on board consigned as prisoners of war. Keith."

Before this letter could reach Egypt, however, Sir Sidney Smith had taken upon himself to become a party to, and indeed the chief negotiator of, a treaty with the French. He had already aroused Lord Nelson's indignation by issuing printed pass-

ports in his own name and under his own seal to Frenchmen who wished to return home from Egypt, although his immediate commander had plainly told him these would not be regarded by the British fleet. And now when the Grand Vizier with a strong army had captured El Arish, and was about to press the French with a powerful force, Sir Sidney used his influence to promote an accommodation between the French and the Turks, on the understanding that the former were to be allowed to quit the country. The conduct of Sir Sidney is even less explicable than the condonation which the British Government extended to it. He was well aware that, by the treaty of 5th January 1799, Turkey could not conclude a separate peace without the assent of England and Russia; and he himself had met Napoleon's advances in August of that year with this objection. Now that he saw a fair probability of the French army being speedily reduced to extremity, and brought into a situation in which they would have to choose between annihilation and unconditional surrender, it is hard to find an adequate excuse for Sir Sidney's overstepping the line of his duty, and putting himself in a position of antagonism to his commanding officers. He could not but have confidence that Lords Keith and Nelson would effectually account for any attempt to relieve the French from Toulon. The only explanation that suggests itself is, that Sir Sidney Smith, sharing

the wish of his brother to gratify the Porte by getting the French out of Ottoman territory on any conditions, deliberately resolved to set aside what he must have known to be the views of the British Ministry, and to trust to the approbation of the Ottoman Government securing his pardon from the British Cabinet. Lord Keith's letter to Kléber showed that he had misgivings about Sir Sidney Smith's diplomacy; but the mischief had been done before the Admiral's orders could reach the Commodore.

A convention was signed at El Arish on the 24th January, between the plenipotentiaries on behalf of the French and Turks, by which the former, in the haughty tone of a conqueror, agreed to quit Egypt, while the Porte was to furnish them with what vessels they required, and to defray the expenses of the evacuation, while the ships containing the army were to have a safe-conduct back to France. Sir Sidney hurried off an express to the British Government by Colonel Douglas, the commander of the Tigre's marines, in the Chameleon, who brought the intelligence to Lord Keith, then lying at Syracuse, on his way from Malta to the Gulf of Genoa. Lord Keith took a very temperate view of his subordinate's indiscretion; and although he personally disapproved of his negotiations, he put the circumstances very dispassionately before the Admiralty, as may be gathered from his despatch to Mr Nepean:—

"QUEEN CHARLOTTE, SYRACUSE,
1st *March* 1800.

"I think it of the highest importance that their lordships should be informed of the circumstances which have taken place in Egypt, and have therefore ordered Captain Maitland of the Chameleon, and Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas of the Marine corps, to proceed to England, as they have been upon the spot, and will be able to give their lordships what information may be wanting in consequence of the haste in which Sir Sidney Smith seems to have sent off the Chameleon.

"I beg leave to observe that the convention has been made before Sir Sidney's receipt of Government's orders on that subject; and although he does not appear to have signed it, he seems nevertheless to have advised and consented thereto, and also to have caused passports to be printed, to which his signature is affixed. These circumstances may in some degree change their lordships' orders and determination, as he has been an officer on the spot, and may be considered as capable of granting terms to an enemy. Lord Elgin has not only conceived but strongly recommended the measure. The Russian ambassador has by a formal deed consented to the terms.

"Colonel Douglas, whom I beg leave to mention to their lordships as an officer of long and good service, seems to think that the army of France in Egypt

are so exasperated against General Buonaparte, that their presence in France might be eventful. Under all these circumstances, I am extremely desirous of their lordships' directions for my proceedings, as I am much inclined to do right. In the meantime I shall not relax from the last orders I gave to the squadron, but detain such of the French as may fall into my hands, having, notwithstanding, judged proper to give Sir Sidney Smith provisional directions by the Perseus, as will appear by my letter to him, of which a copy is enclosed."

On the receipt of Lord Keith's orders, Sir Sidney Smith wrote to Kléber on 21st February, informing the General that the treaty of El Arish had been disavowed by his commander-in-chief, and that he was under the necessity of prohibiting the French from quitting Egypt. He added, however, "You will observe that the despatches I enclose are of old date (1st January), written after orders transmitted from London on 15th or 17th December, evidently dictated by the idea that you were about to treat separately with the Turks, and to prevent the execution of any measures contrary to our treaty of alliance. But now that my Government is better informed, and that the convention is really ratified, I have not the slightest doubt that the restriction against the execution of the treaty will be removed before the arrival of the transports."

In offering this consolation, Sir Sidney was again exceeding his commission, for he had no good grounds for presuming that anything had occurred to make the Ministry alter its resolution regarding the return of the French. He trusted, however, that the representations of Lord Elgin, who had been won over to the views of the Porte by Mr Spencer Smith, would make the Government change their minds. Sir Sidney himself hurried from Cyprus to Alexandria, with a view to mitigate the effects which the refusal of the treaty might have upon the mind of Kléber and his colleagues. He reached Egypt on the 8th March, and immediately wrote to Citizen Poussielgue, the administrator-general of finances, to the following effect: "I owe it to the French army, and to myself, to acquaint them with the state of things, which, however, I am endeavouring to change. At any rate, I stand between them and the false impressions which have dictated a proceeding of this kind; and as I know the liberality of my superiors, I doubt not that I shall produce the same conviction on their minds that I feel myself respecting the business which we concluded." Kléber's response was a proclamation publishing Lord Keith's letter, with the comment: "Soldats! on ne répond à une telle insolence que par des victoires; préparez vous à combattre;" and orders were instantly issued for the troops to concentrate before the ruins of Heliopolis, there to await

the expected attack of the Grand Vizier. Sir Sidney, however, insisted upon Poussielgue immediately repairing to Lord Keith, and laying the circumstances of the convention before him; for which purpose he placed an English frigate at his disposal, although he was then loudly complaining that Lord Nelson did not allow him sufficient ships for the service of the Levant. Poussielgue arrived at Leghorn while Lord Keith was busied in the siege of Genoa, and consequently was unable to obtain an interview. He addressed a letter to his lordship, appealing to the good faith of England, which he argued had been violated in the refusal to recognise the treaty. Lord Keith returned the following reply:—

"MINOTAUR, *April* 25, 1800.

"I have this day received the letter which you have done me the honour to write. I have to inform you that I have given no orders or authority against the observance of the convention between the Grand Vizier and General Kléber, having received no orders on this head from the King's Ministers. Accordingly I was of opinion that his Majesty should take no part in it; but since the treaty has been concluded, his Majesty being desirous of showing his respect for his allies, I have received instructions to allow a passage to the French troops, and I lost not a moment in sending to Egypt orders to permit them to return to France without molestation. At the

same time, I thought it my duty to my King, and those of his allies whose states lie in the seas through which they are to pass, to require that they should not return in a mass, nor in ships of war, nor in armed ships. I wished, likewise, that the cartel should carry no merchandise, which would be contrary to the law of nations. I have likewise asked of General Kléber his word of honour that neither he nor his army should commit any hostilities against the Coalesced Powers; and I doubt not that General Kléber will find the conditions perfectly reasonable. . . . KEITH."

But before Lord Keith's second letter arrived in Egypt the battle of Heliopolis had been fought, and the army of the Grand Vizier completely routed; Cairo had revolted, and the insurrection there been quelled. Kléber again offered to renew negotiations, but before any progress could be made he was assassinated by a Mohammedan fanatic at Cairo on 14th June; and Menou, his successor, was ambitious to carve out of Egypt the empire which his predecessor had failed to establish.

The convention of El Arish created a keen controversy both in Britain and in France. The English Opposition and French politicians were loud in their abuse of both the Ministry and Lord Keith, upbraiding them with breach of faith, with inhumanity, and with a ruthless desire to exterminate a

perishing enemy. Lord Keith, however, must stand acquitted of any culpability in the transaction. His conduct alone, of all the parties engaged, was perfectly consistent with the letter of his instructions. His orders were that no Frenchman was to be allowed to return to France except as a prisoner of war. And when a subordinate officer, upon his own authority, became a party to the conclusion of a treaty in favour of the French, he lost no time in informing Kléber of the course which his instructions prescribed. His despatch to the Admiralty, which we have already given, distinctly shows that he had no wish to press Sir Sidney Smith's assumption of a power which he had never been commissioned to exercise, to the disadvantage of that officer; and that he clearly apprehended that matters had gone so far as to make it perhaps expedient for the Government to change its views. It is quite easy to reconcile Lord Keith's letter to Poussielgue with that written to General Kléber. He gave no orders against the observance of the treaty; but, until he received instructions from home, he was prepared to act upon those which he had already received, which would have imposed upon him the duty of seizing the French as they returned. Whatever blame to the British arose from the treaty of El Arish must rest with Sir Sidney Smith, who acted without the orders of his commanding officer, or without consulting the views of his Government. The British Government,

on its part, at once recognised that Sir Sidney Smith had implicated its honour. "No sooner," said Mr Pitt, in reply to the attacks of the Opposition, "was it known in England that the French general had the faith of a British officer pledged to him, and was disposed to act upon it, than instructions were sent out to have the convention executed, though the officer in question had in fact no authority to sign it." It was no inconsiderable sacrifice that the British Government was making to preserve its good name; for the aid of the army of Egypt would have been of immense assistance to Buonaparte, who by this time was fully launched in his career of conquest. The position taken up by Lord Keith with regard to the convention met with the full approval of both the Cabinet and the Admiralty.

When the conclusion of operations at Genoa left Lord Keith leisure to turn his attention to the other details of his command, he found his situation beset on all sides with difficulty. The fleet at his disposal was too small for the wide area over which its services were required, while a number of the ships were old and battered. Malta still held out doggedly; and, to Lord Keith's great mortification, the French had profited by Lord Nelson's retirement, and the temporary withdrawal of ships from the Sicilian seas, to throw a convoy of provisions into Valetta. Both at Toulon and at Brest threatening naval preparations were going on, which might at

any time compel the Admiral to concentrate his ships and give battle. The French, too, were beginning to overrun Italy, and his services would probably be required to aid in operations on that coast; while in Africa the Dey of Algiers, who was carrying on active intrigues with the Republic, seemed likely to give trouble before long time elapsed.

Early in the year Lord Keith had impressed upon the Government the necessity of sending troops to the Mediterranean to co-operate with the fleet and the Turks in clearing Egypt of the French. His views were warmly seconded by Lord Melville, who went before the other members of the Cabinet in pressing for energetic action against the Republican army in Egypt. In consequence of his lordship's representations, Sir Ralph Abercromby, who had recently returned from the Duke of York's fruitless expedition to Holland, was appointed, with secret orders, to command an expedition to the Mediterranean, and arrived at Port Mahon on 22d June. Here he found that Lord Keith had been applying in vain to Lieutenant-General Fox for troops to assist at Genoa; and he at once continued his voyage to Leghorn, where, on his arrival on 1st July, he joined Lord Keith, and learned the events which had befallen in consequence of the armistice of Alexandria. Lord Keith had also received secret instructions regarding the operations which he was to undertake with Sir Ralph; but these required to

be re-read in the light of the altered position of affairs; and a consultation having taken place between the two commanders, it was determined that the troops should return to Minorca, with the exception of a regiment sent to Malta, whither Sir Ralph Abercromby had already despatched 1500 men from Minorca in the end of June. Lord Keith would gladly have made an immediate attempt upon Egypt; but the Government, whose policy had been altered by the convention of El Arish, were disposed to wait until the plans of Menou had been more distinctly made manifest.

The uncertainty of the course which the Allies meant to pursue with regard to the French designs on Italy, and business connected with the scattered squadrons, as well as the execution of orders which he had received to provide for extensive purchases of grain and stores in the Mediterranean, detained Lord Keith at Leghorn until the beginning of August; and on his arrival at Port Mahon, he shifted his flag from the Minotaur to the Foudroyant, which had been Lord Nelson's flag-ship, and which had just finished refitting at Mahon. At Minorca he found unmistakable proofs of an understanding between the French and Algiers, and had already made preparations for paying the Dey a visit, when he received secret orders from the Admiralty directing him, in conjunction with Sir Ralph Abercromby, to make a descent on Cadiz, where the presence of a

considerable fleet was causing anxiety to the Government. Sir Ralph's troops were immediately embarked, and the fleet put to sea on 31st August, with Gibraltar as a rendezvous, where they might concert operations when they had obtained the latest news of the enemy's situation. Before sailing, Lord Keith had received intelligence of armed vessels which were taking in stores in Barcelona roads, and had despatched Captain Oliver of the Mermaid with another ship to reconnoitre them. Learning that these vessels were designed for the relief of Malta, Lord Keith directed Captain Louis of the Minotaur and Captain Hillyer of the Niger to cut them out. The ships arrived off Barcelona on 3d September, about eight in the evening. After dark, Captain Louis despatched eight boats, under the orders of Captain Hillyer and Lieutenant Schomberg, against the enemy, which proved to be the Concepcion or Esmeralda and the Paz, 22-gun corvettes. Finding a Swedish galliot standing into port, Captain Hillyer had her boarded, and made her tow in the boats towards the mole. When the battery, perceiving the boats, began to open fire, Hillyer cut loose from the galliot, and pulled with might and main for the Concepcion. The latter fired one broadside, which passed over the boats without effect; and before she could reload, the British were alongside and boarding. After a short but sharp hand-to-hand fight, the Concep-

cion was seized. The other corvette slipped her anchor and endeavoured to escape under the batteries; but the British quickly boarded her, and both were safely brought off with a trifling loss in killed and wounded. Both Captain Hillyer and Lieutenant Schomberg were recommended by Lord Keith to the Admiralty for this exploit.

While at Gibraltar the weather in the Straits was so tempestuous that, just as the convoy which was bringing Sir James Pulteney and his forces to join Sir Ralph Abercromby hove in sight, Lord Keith ordered the fleet to run for Tetuan Bay, where they could water better than at Gibraltar. He himself soon returned in the Foudroyant to the Rock, where he received the welcome intelligence that Malta had at last been compelled by famine to surrender to the British and Neapolitan troops. This success removed a great load from his mind, as well as placed more ships at his disposal, of which he stood greatly in need. Assurances, too, were received from Algiers, which were sufficiently satisfactory to save Lord Keith from making a hostile demonstration. Sir Ralph Abercromby and Lord Keith were accordingly able to give their undivided attention to the affairs of Cadiz, and to collecting information regarding the situation of the garrison and the fleet in the roads. A deadly epidemic was, however, raging in Southern Spain, particularly in Cadiz; and the Governor of Gibraltar had cut off

all communication with the Spaniards in consequence, so that it was not easy to ascertain the strength of the enemy. They learned that there were 7000 men in Cadiz, while at Seville there was a camp of upwards of 17,000 soldiers, which might be expected to move to the assistance of the town. The news of the expedition assembled at Gibraltar had caused general alarm in Spain, and troops were being directed from all quarters towards the expected scene of action, while a number of vessels had been sunk across the entrance of Cadiz harbour. The armament under Sir Ralph and Lord Keith was more imposing than strong, for though it mustered 131 sail, only 20 of them were ships of the line, and 27 frigates; and it was quite impossible under the circumstances that Lord Keith could detain the whole fleet any length of time on the coast. The troops numbered about 20,000 infantry; but they were by no means well provided with stores, if they were to land and maintain a position in Andalucia.

Lord Keith weighed from Gibraltar on 3d October, and was with the fleet off Cadiz on the 5th. The coast had been thoroughly examined with the view to a landing, and the troops were all prepared for disembarkation as soon as a decision had been come to as to the most practicable place; but in the evening a flag of truce came off from Cadiz, bearing this letter from the Governor to Lord Keith:—

"The affliction which carries off in this city and its environs thousands of victims, and which threatens not to suspend its ravages until it has cut off all who have hitherto escaped, being calculated to excite compassion, it is with surprise that I see the squadron, under the command of your Excellency, come to augment the consternation of the inhabitants. I have too exalted an opinion of the humanity of the English people, and of yours in particular, to think that you would wish to render our condition more deplorable. However, if, in consequence of the orders your Excellency has received, you are inclined to draw down upon yourself the execration of all nations, to cover yourself with disgrace in the eyes of the whole universe by oppressing the unfortunate, and attacking those who are supposed to be incapable of defence, I declare to you that the garrison under my orders, accustomed to behold death with a serene countenance, and to brave dangers much greater than all the perils of war, know how to make war which shall not terminate but with their entire destruction.

"I hope that the answer of your Excellency will inform me whether I am to speak the language of consolation to the unfortunate inhabitants, or whether I am to rouse them to indignation and vengeance. May God preserve your Excellency.

"THOMAS DE MORLA.

"*October* 5, 1800.

"The vessels employed in the blockade have not till now prevented the fishers from exercising their harmless industry. It must excite astonishment that your Excellency should deprive us of this small comfort."

Pitiable as the condition of Cadiz was, there was a curious mixture of simplicity and astuteness in De Morla's letter which the two commanders had no difficulty in penetrating. Fresh as he was from the horrors of Genoa, to which those of Cadiz could bear no comparison, Lord Keith was not likely to fall into the error of sacrificing his duty to misplaced compassion; and when he and Sir Ralph had consulted together, the following reply was returned:—

"On board his Britannic Majesty's Ship
the Foudroyant, off Cadiz,
5th October.

"We have had the honour of receiving your Excellency's letter of this date, in which you describe to us the deplorable state of this city. We are deeply affected at this calamity, though we have good reason to believe that its effects have been much less disastrous.

"We are not ignorant that a great number of his Catholic Majesty's vessels are armed in order to join the naval forces of the French, and to be employed in prolonging the troubles which afflict all the nations of

Europe, disturb public order, and destroy the happiness of individuals. We have received orders from our sovereign to use every effort to defeat the projects of the common enemy, by endeavouring to take or destroy the ships of war which are in the harbour and arsenal of Cadiz.

"The number of troops intrusted to our command leave but little doubt as to the success of the enterprise. We are little disposed to multiply unnecessarily the evils inseparable from war. Should your Excellency consent to give up to us the vessels, armed or arming in order to act against our king, and to prolong the misfortunes of neighbouring nations, your crews and officers shall be at liberty, and our fleet shall withdraw; otherwise we must act conformably to the orders which have been given to us, and your Excellency cannot attribute to any other than yourself the additional evils which you fear.

"We have the honour to be, with respect, &c.,

"R. ABERCROMBY.

"KEITH."

All day on the 6th a frigate was kept in Cadiz harbour under a flag of truce, waiting for De Morla's answer, which came in the evening, in the shape of a vapouring reproachful letter, telling the British commanders that they would have to make more suitable propositions if they wished them accepted. Of this Sir Ralph and Lord Keith took no

notice; but they had employed the interval of truce in a careful consideration of the situation, and the former ordered the troops that were ready in the boats, waiting for orders to land, to be re-embarked on the morning of the 7th. On the night of the 6th, Sir Ralph and the Admiral discussed all the circumstances connected with their position. The points on which their decision turned were these : 1st, That Rota Bay seemed to be the only place where the fleet could anchor with any degree of safety and keep up the supplies of the army. 2d, That that bay is exposed to west and south-west winds, and is too contracted in extent to protect so numerous a fleet as 192 vessels, which might produce great danger from their driving on board each other, particularly as many of them had lost anchors and cables, and some of them masts, in Vigo Bay. 3d, That it was necessary to have remained at least fourteen days in the bay at this advanced season. 4th, That there seemed no prospect of seizing the ships in a state of equipment without taking the city, and that great difficulty would have been encountered in destroying the arsenal, on account of the rivers and other obstructions in the way to it, and of the approaching rains, which might be expected to swell all the torrents. And, 5th, That there was reason to believe the sickness was very great and of a most alarming nature, and that it would most probably be communicated to the British forces.

The conclusion arrived at was, that the risk to be incurred greatly outweighed the object to be attained, and that the project of a descent upon Cadiz ought therefore to be relinquished. It was not without great reluctance that two such experienced veterans came to this conclusion; but they knew that Cadiz only formed a part, and not the most important part, of the plans which had been committed to their charge, and that the destruction or capture of the Cadiz fleet would not repay the chances of the troops being put *hors de combat* by disease. When this decision was taken, no time was lost in returning to the Straits; but in consequence of tempestuous weather and hard gales, it was not until the 14th that the Admiral anchored at Gibraltar, where the fleet came in greatly damaged for the most part, and in need of repairs. Here he was busily employed for some weeks patching up his ships, expecting all the while important orders from England, which would give to himself and Sir Ralph Abercromby the signal for executing the next part of the instructions they were intrusted to carry out.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LANDING AT ABOUKIR.

1800–1801.

It was not without considerable hesitation that the British Government made up its mind to drive the French from Egypt by a military armament, as well as by operations by sea. The treaty of El Arish had interposed a break in the continuity of British policy; and so long as there was a chance of Menou reassuming the negotiations which had been begun by Kléber, the Government was unwilling to add to the numerous undertakings which it already had on hand. Lord Melville was almost alone in pressing upon the king, and upon his colleagues in the Government, the necessity of sending an expedition to Egypt, not only for the removal of a great source of trouble to the peace of eastern Europe, but for the sake of our Indian interests, which became jeopardised as soon as the French obtained undisturbed possession of the navigation of the Red Sea. It was Lord Melville, likewise, who planned the campaign to

be undertaken from the Mediterranean side by Sir Ralph Abercromby and Lord Keith, and by an expedition from India, which was to advance upon the French from the Red Sea.

It was on the 25th October that orders for the Egyptian expedition were received at Gibraltar, and Lord Keith gladly began to make his hurried preparations. More than nine months before he had insisted upon the Government sending European troops to Egypt; and at length his counsels were being acted upon. Sir James Pulteney with his division quitted Sir Ralph and sailed for Portugal; and on 4th November the first portion of the fleet left for Minorca, *en route* for the Levant, while the remainder, with Sir Ralph, quitted Gibraltar for Malta on the following day. Pressure of business connected with the fleet detained the Admiral at Port Mahon until the end of November. Among other correspondence, he had to deal with pressing applications for assistance and protection from the Government at Naples, which was threatened by the imminence of a French invasion; but the urgent service on which Lord Keith was about to be engaged, compelled him to be content with directing the senior officer on the coast of Tuscany to give such protection to the seaboard of Naples as his slender force could afford; but he afterwards managed to send additional assistance. Before leaving Mahon Lord Keith appointed Captain Beaver—who had so

greatly distinguished himself at Genoa by cutting out the Prima galley, and by conducting the bombardment—his flag-captain on the Foudroyant, and Captain Young assistant-captain.

The Admiral arrived at Malta on the 9th December, and found Sir Ralph Abercromby and the rest of the fleet waiting him in Valetta harbour, where they had anchored on the 30th November. The two commanders issued proclamation of the blockade of Alexandria, and disembarked the troops, that the ships might be cleaned and the men inspected. Lord Keith also procured from Leghorn the services of Mr Baldwin, who for many years had been British consul at Cairo and Alexandria, and who gladly consented to join the expedition, and put his experience of Egypt at the service of the leaders. They learned that the Capitan Pasha had returned to Constantinople, leaving an inferior officer to cruise with the Turkish fleet, in company with Sir Sidney Smith, off the Egyptian coast. The plan of the campaign did not aim at a direct descent upon Egypt from Malta, but provided that the fleet, with the troops on board, should put into some port in Rhodes, where they might be more fully provisioned and furnished by the Ottoman Government with horses, gunboats, and auxiliaries, which Lord Elgin had been strenuously pressing upon the Porte to get into a forward state of preparation. Had Abercromby and Lord Keith been left to themselves, they

would probably have hazarded an attack upon Alexandria with the forces they had; and the result showed that they did not profit much by trusting to Ottoman promises.

The fleet sailed from Malta on 20th and 21st December, but Lord Keith quitted them to cruise off Candia, and to examine the coast of Asia Minor, to see if he could fall in with a harbour suitable for anchorage to the ships. On the way the Admiral captured a brig from Alexandria, with a French colonel on board, who turned out to be Tallien, although his identity was at the time concealed; but beyond an exaggerated account of the French strength and resources, no information of the state of affairs in Egypt could be obtained. Lord Keith pitched upon the magnificent harbour of Marmorice, in Caramania, as the most suitable station for the fleet, which could anchor there in deep water almost close to the shore; and the soldiers and sick could be landed to recruit themselves after their weary months of tossing on ship-board. Here, by the 1st January 1801, the whole expedition was assembled. The day was of note in Lord Keith's life, as it saw him promoted from Vice-Admiral of the Red to Admiral of the Blue, in the 'Gazette' issued on the union of Great Britain with Ireland, although the news did not reach him until some months after.

Lord Keith had sent instructions to Sir Sidney Smith to have preparations made for the disembark-

ment of the troops; but he found neither a sufficiency of small vessels and gunboats, nor even Sir Sidney himself, from whom in person the commanders of the expedition had been anxious to obtain information. The great promises made by the Porte were also found to have been very fallacious. "Their Government," writes Lord Keith, "seems well inclined; but they are so slow in everything, that it is distressing to a degree, and the absence of the Capitan Pasha is severely felt." Provisions were procurable only at extortionate prices; and what was worse, the promised horses were found, when they arrived, to be such wretched animals, that the dragoons could scarcely be persuaded to take them over, and the whole of the cavalry petitioned to be allowed to serve as foot-soldiers. Sir Robert Wilson states that out of several hundred horses supplied by the Turks, only 200 were retained for the cavalry, while the rest were either shot or sold for a dollar apiece.

Except in one respect, the detour to Marmorice was a disappointment to the British. Lord Keith seized the opportunity, while waiting for horses and provisions, to practise the expedition in disembarking and landing; and there can be little question that the masterly way in which the troops were put on shore at Aboukir, was due in a great measure to the frequent rehearsals in Marmorice harbour.

On 4th January General Moore was despatched for intelligence to the camp of the Grand Vizier,

then at Jaffa; and in his absence Sir Ralph and Lord Keith held frequent consultations as to the plan of the campaign. The distance of Aboukir from Alexandria, fourteen miles, and the want of water in the roads, were arguments against landing there, as the cannon, provision, wood, and water necessary to the forcing of the outer wall of old Alexandria, would have to be dragged so far by the troops. Another course was to land at Rosetta, and seizing that branch of the Nile, to cut off communications between Alexandria and Cairo. The Damietta mouth presented so many difficulties from the danger of the coast, the distance of debarkation, and the rumoured strength of the French works, that it was speedily set aside. In the end Lord Keith was able to report to the Admiralty, on 21st January, that they had resolved to make a direct attack on the city of Alexandria itself, debarking the army in Aboukir Bay,—a resolution to which Nelson's glorious victory of Aboukir was a recent omen of success.

When the month of January had passed, and there was no appearance of the Capitan Pasha and the Turkish gunboats, or any news of their having quitted Constantinople, where the Feast of Bairam was then going on, the patience of the leaders began to be exhausted. General Moore came back on the 16th February, and gave a gloomy account of the condition of the Grand Vizier's army, which was

insignificant in numbers, insubordinate in discipline, and ineffective from disease. He also brought information that the French strength in Egypt was considerably greater than the British had been led to suppose; and that the position they had taken up in the country would task the energies of a much stronger and better equipped force than that which Sir Ralph Abercromby had under his command. Anxiety was increased by the intelligence which arrived on the 17th that two French frigates had escaped our cruisers, and had thrown themselves into Alexandria harbour, with troops and military stores. In spite of the dissuasion of the Turkish pilots, who declared that no vessel could safely lie off the Egyptian coast until after the equinox, Lord Keith determined to delay no longer. The army was re-embarked on 20th February, and sailed the second day after with a fair breeze for Alexandria. Many of the ships were not in good condition, for a severe gale on 8th February had damaged the vessels crowded together in Marmorice Bay; and they had not sailed far when a Greek transport, laden with mules, foundered, from which only one man escaped. On the voyage the Admiral was joined by Captain Miller of the Minorca, who brought information that the French were busy fortifying the heights near Alexandria and Aboukir. But what was a more welcome arrival, the Pique, with a convoy of provisions from England, came in sight on the 26th. On 1st March

the look-out ship signalled that land was in sight; and after the coast had been made out, Lord Keith and Sir Ralph Abercromby determined to run for Aboukir Bay. By daylight next morning the Admiral's flag-ship was off the island; and with the Minotaur and Swiftsure leading, the fleet bore up to its anchorage, steering through the wrecks which still bore testimony to Nelson's victory of the Nile. They observed signs of activity among the French, and two guns were fired from the castle of Aboukir. The coast was carefully reconnoitred, and a landing-place fixed upon; but the day was so far advanced, and the swell in the bay was so strong for the boats, that they determined to defer the attempt until the next morning.

To the French on shore, the expedition, as it lay at anchor, presented an appearance much more formidable than reality. Although over 100 sail of all descriptions were assembled in the bay, the effective part of the fleet was small, consisting only of the following vessels: Foudroyant, 80 guns, Lord Keith, and Captains Beaver and Young; Kent, Rear-Admiral Sir R. Bickerton, Bart., and Captain William Hope; Ajax, Honourable Captain Cochrane; Minotaur, Captain Louis; Northumberland, Captain Martin; Tigre, Captain Sir Sidney Smith; and Swiftsure, Captain Hallowell. Except the Foudroyant, all the others were 74-gun ships. The troops on board have been estimated at from 15,330 to 17,512;

but it is agreed on all sides that Sir Ralph Abercromby could not put more than 12,000 effective men in the field. The French army was little short of 25,000 men; and but for the hopes entertained that Sir David Baird would speedily arrive on the Red Sea coast with a force of from 5000 to 6000 men, the odds would have rendered the campaign hazardous to the British, for they had heard such bad accounts of the Ottoman army as to be able to place little confidence in its assistance.

On the morning of 2d March, the Régenérée, a French frigate, with 200 infantry and artillery, and stores, managed, to Lord Keith's intense mortification, to slip past the British fleet while it was making for the anchorage, and to run in for Alexandria before it could be overhauled. The story of the Régenérée's daring has been coloured by the assertion that she had kept company with the British fleet the whole of the previous day, answering its signals and obeying orders; but this legend probably arose from the fact that the Mediterranean signal-books had recently fallen into the hands of the French, probably through Portuguese agency. At all events, the Régenérée must have passed through the British fleet; and the same night the Lodi, brig, also succeeded in running into Alexandria harbour unnoticed.

On the morning of the 6th the wind was blowing hard from the north, while the swell in the bay was

so strong as to make it unsafe to launch the boats, and it was not until the afternoon of the 7th that the sea calmed down. In the meantime the Romulus had arrived, with the disquieting intelligence of the French fleet being in the Mediterranean. Lord Keith, Sir Ralph, Admiral Bickerton, and General Hutchinson, held a meeting to consider the news which menaced their expedition. Lord Keith argued strongly that it would be fatal to allow the French fleet to approach Alexandria, and he would have put out to attack it as soon as the troops were disembarked; but Sir Ralph felt that he could not trust to maintaining his position on shore with his small force without the presence of the fleet; and that the army could not spare the men belonging to the ships and the assistance of the boats. In the end it was agreed that, if information should arrive of the enemy being on their passage to the coast of Egypt, the seamen and marines should be embarked, and the squadron stand off Alexandria. Sir Ralph supported his argument with the suggestion that the Government would be sure to send a sufficient naval force to check the French in the Mediterranean—a probability of which Lord Keith, with his greater experience of naval affairs, did not feel so thoroughly convinced.

While the expedition was cooped up by the weather in Aboukir Bay, they had the mortification to see active preparations going on for giv-

ing them a warm reception on shore. All round about, on the tops of the sandhills that overlook the Bay of Aboukir, they could see the enemy taking up positions, while troops were discovered to be on the march towards Aboukir from Rosetta.

At two o'clock on the morning of the 8th, Lord Keith made the signal for the troops to embark in the boats; and within an hour they were sent off to rendezvous near the Mondovi, Captain Stewart, which was anchored about a gunshot from the shore. "Here," says Lord Keith, "it had been determined that they were to be assembled and properly arranged; but such was the extent of the anchorage occupied by so large a fleet, and so great the distance of many of them from any one given point, that it was not till nine the signal could be made for the boats to advance towards the shore. The whole line immediately began to move with great celerity towards the beach, between the castle of Aboukir and the entrance of the sea, under the directions of the Honourable Captain Cochrane of H.M.S. Ajax, assisted by Captains Stevenson, Scott, Larmour, Apthorpe, and Morrison, of the Europa, Stately, Diadem, Druid, and Thisbe, and the agents of the respective transports; the right flank being protected by the Cruelle cutter, and the Dangereux and Janissary gun-vessels, and the left by the Entreprenant cutter, Malta schooner, and Negresse gun-vessel, with two launches of the fleet on each,

armed for the purpose of supplying the places of the Turkish gun-vessels, of whose services I had been deprived. Captain Sir Sidney Smith of the Tigre, with the Captains Ribouteau, Guion, Saville, Burn, and Hillyer, of the Astræa, Eurus, Experiment, Blonde, and Niger, appointed with a detachment of seamen to co-operate with the army, had the charge of the launches, with the field-artillery accompanying the troops. The Tartarus and Fury were placed in proper situations for throwing shot and shell with advantage; and the Peterel, Chameleon, and Minorca were moored as near as possible with their broadsides to the shore. The enemy had not failed to avail himself of unavoidable delays to which we had been exposed for strengthening the naturally difficult coast to which we were to approach. The whole garrison of Alexandria, said to amount to near 3000 men, reinforced with many small detachments that had been observed to advance from the Rosetta branch, was appointed for its defence. Field-pieces were placed on the most commanding heights, and in the intervals of the numerous sandhills which cover the shore, all of which were lined with musketry, — the beach on either wing being flanked with cannon, and parties of cavalry held in readiness to advance. The fire of the enemy was successively opened from their mortars and field-pieces as the boats got within reach; and as they approached to the shore, the successive discharges of grape-shot and

Photogravure Goupil & Cie

THE LANDING AT ABOUKIR

of musketry from behind the sandhills seemed to threaten them with destruction; while the castle of Aboukir on the right flank maintained a constant and harassing discharge of long-shot and shells. But the ardour of our officers and men was not to be damped. No moment of hesitation intervened. The beach was arrived at—a footing obtained,—the troops advanced, and the enemy were forced to relinquish all the advantageous positions which they had held. The boats returned without delay for the second division; and before the evening, the whole army, with few exceptions, was landed, with such articles of provisions and stores as required the most immediate attention."

The place of debarkation was a narrow beach of sand, commanded by a rugged sandhill in the background, with infantry lining the summit and cavalry behind; while a battery on the French right, and the castle of Aboukir to the left, kept up a hot fire upon the boats as they pulled vigorously to shore. Some boats were sunk, others swamped, but the sailors rowed with might and main through the hot fire. Almost before the boats touched ground, the 23d Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the 40th leapt into the water and assailed the heights at the point of the bayonet. The Black Watch had formed in a few seconds upon the sands with the same regularity as on parade, and at once stormed the heights. The eminences were carried, and three pieces of cannon

were captured on the hills to the left almost before the whole of the first division could be landed. When the Black Watch gained the brow of the sandhills, they were charged by 200 dragoons, who were rapidly driven back by the bayonet. The dragoons wheeled round the hill and swept along by the beach, attacking the Guards, who were just in the act of landing, and had scarcely formed into their ranks; but the 58th, drawn up on the right, poured their fire into the French cavalry, under cover of which the Guards completed their formation, and speedily drove back the dragoons. The 54th and the 1st Royals, which were the last to reach the shore, landed just in time to repel an attack made by 600 infantry through a hollow upon the left flank of the British. The whole action, which was fiercely fought on both sides, had not lasted an hour when General Friant felt obliged to yield the position and call off his troops in the direction of Alexandria, leaving 400 killed and wounded out of a force of at least 2500 men, and losing eight pieces of cannon. Sir Ralph, who had watched the landing with the most intense anxiety from shipboard, went on shore in the afternoon, and by evening the whole of the active force were encamped on the Aboukir heights.

The landing at Aboukir is a sore subject with French military historians, and it is impossible to make any two accounts of the French defence correspond together. Only in one point are they

agreed — in disparaging the bravery of the victorious troops. The soldiers, they say, lay extended in the bottom of the boats—an altogether impossible position, considering their numbers. General Bertrand is a generous exception to the others. "Their debarkation," he declares, "was admirable. In less than five or six minutes they presented 5500 men in battle array; it was like a movement on the opera stage; three such completed the landing of the army."[1] If any fault is to be found, it is that the French retreat was not immediately followed up, as in the confusion Alexandria must have at once been captured; but ignorance of the strength of the enemy and of the nature of the fortifications, made Sir Ralph hesitate to peril his men by a *coup de main*.

Next day the Commander-in-Chief issued a general order praising the ardent bravery, coolness, regularity, and order of the army, and returning his thanks for the effective assistance rendered by the navy, and "the judicious arrangements directed by Admiral Lord Keith." Captain Cochrane and the officers engaged in the debarkation, and Sir Sidney Smith, who acted with the army on shore, and brought up the field-artillery from the boats with his sailors and marines, were also warmly praised.

The next three days the fleet was busied in landing guns, stores, and water for the troops which had

[1] Las Casas, i. 242.

advanced a short way in the direction of Alexandria. A successful search was made for wells, and the castle of Aboukir, which refused to surrender, was invested by a small force. On the 11th Sir Ralph completed his reconnaissances, and issued orders for marching on the following day. The route lay along the narrow peninsula leading to Alexandria, and lying between Lake Mareotis and the sea. Flying squadrons of cavalry made several attacks on the advanced-guard, but no serious opposition was offered. During the night it was rumoured in the camp and among the fleet that Menou had arrived from Cairo with 10,000 men, and was ready to give battle. Lord Keith had sent on a battalion of marines under Lieutenant-Colonel Smith with the army; and on the evening of the 12th he had to land sailors to protect the works on the heights of Aboukir, and prevent sorties from the castle.

On the morning of the 13th, the British found the enemy numbering about 6000, of which 600 were cavalry, and with over 20 guns. They were admirably posted for directing a heavy fire upon the British advance. The British force was divided into three corps, and the attack commenced from its left wing, which was supported by a number of launches under Captain Hillyer in the lake of Aboukir. A grove of date-palms in front of Mandora Tower extended across the British advance, and scarcely had the foremost troops passed this when Lanusse

directed a charge of the whole body of cavalry and of several battalions of infantry against them. The steady fire of the 90th and 92d regiments checked the impetuosity of the French onset, and speedily threw both cavalry and infantry into confusion; while the second line turned the right of the French army, and carried the position on which they had taken their stand before the commencement of the action. Here they halted for a brief space, until they found that the French had again formed on the heights of Nicopolis, in front of the ruins of the Arab city of Alexandria. Sir Ralph resolved to press them still further, and sent forward Generals Hutchinson and Moore to make a simultaneous attack on both the enemy's flanks. These advanced until they found themselves under the range of the forts, and then they were obliged to retire, as the position which the French held would not have been tenable by the British though they had carried it, until they were ready to invest the town. The British suffered severely in the latter part of the action; but the troops had preserved admirable order under the severe and galling fire to which they were exposed for several hours; and the army in the evening took up its position on the heights which the French had held the evening before, and which commanded the whole peninsula of Aboukir up to the defences of Alexandria, and thus entirely cut off the city from communications except by way of the desert. The

British loss in the action was close on 1200 men; and the Commander-in-Chief had had a horse shot under him, and narrowly escaped being made a prisoner by the French cavalry. Early in the action, Lieutenant-Colonel Erskine, commanding the 92d Highlanders, received a mortal wound, and was taken on board the Admiral's flag-ship, where he lingered until the 5th April.

The same day Lord Keith sent on information to Sir Ralph of the advance of the Grand Vizier, who had reached El Arish, and was crossing the desert. While the operations were going on on shore, Lord Keith was employed in receiving the wounded, in keeping the forces provided with stores, and in watching every opportunity for aiding the troops. On the 18th the castle of Aboukir capitulated, and what was more an eyesore than a danger on the communications of the army was removed; and on the same afternoon the Capitan Pasha joined Lord Keith with three line-of-battle ships, four frigates, and a number of corvettes and small country craft. This reinforcement came at a very welcome moment, for every seaman that the Admiral could spare had already been sent on shore, as he found himself unable to resist Sir Ralph's entreaties for more men; and had any emergency occurred to necessitate the movement of the fleet, the ships of war would have had to be manned by motley crews from the troop-ships and transports. Fortunately news had arrived of the

French fleet having put into Toulon, which made the Admiral have less hesitation in reducing the number of seamen on board.

During the next eight days the British contented themselves with holding their position, with getting forward field-guns, making reconnaissances, and constructing batteries. The delay was unfortunate, as nothing was gained by it, and time was afforded for Menou to throw himself into Alexandria. He had crossed Lake Mareotis with great difficulty, having brought his artillery and 5000 men with him; and he had taken care to cut off all supplies from the interior as he came along. Menou reached Alexandria on the 19th March, and the last of his troops got in on the following day. The movement and bustle consequent on his arrival in the French lines had prepared the British for an immediate attack. The army was posted across the tongue of land between the corner of the lake of Aboukir and the sea, with General Ludlow and the Guards in the centre of the line. General Moore commanded on the right, with the ruins of a Roman camp in his front, and a few gunboats, under Captain Maitland, flanking him on the sea. General Craddock held the left, supported by gunboats under Captain Hillyer, in the angle of Lake Aboukir. In front were sandhills, which Sir Ralph had caused to be intrenched, and the army behind was disposed in two lines in order of battle.

About three o'clock on the morning of the 21st

March, the sound of firing on the left wing made the
generals anticipate that an attack was commencing
from the direction of the bed of Lake Mareotis; bu
before any movement could be made, the noise
musketry and indications of an engagement can
from the extreme right of the line. Menou ha
made a feint by despatching a dromedary corps b
the dry bed of the lake, to draw away attenti
in that direction from the main attack. A thi
morning mist hung over the sandhills; and as t
French advanced, driving in our vedettes before the
the British could not fire until the glazed hats of t
enemy were visible. This was Lanusse, whose div
sion had advanced upon the redoubt in front of t
Roman camp; but his troops had fallen into co
fusion in the dark, and in endeavouring to refor
them he received a mortal wound. From the r
doubt the 28th kept up a steady fire upon the Frenc
which became deadly effective as they broke up
the battle. Rampon, with a column from the Frenc
centre, seeing the danger of Lanusse's division, ne
advanced against the redoubt, and with other tw
columns turned the position, and caught the Britis
left in flank and in rear. At the same time Menc
charged the British right and right centre with h
cavalry. The situation became most critical, an
nothing but the utmost daring and coolness on th
part of the British left and left centre could hav
saved the line from being borne back. The 28t

were surrounded on all sides; the 58th, which came to the rescue, was also speedily engaged in front and in rear; the 23d and the 42d next came to their support, but only to receive the charge of the cavalry, which passed through them, almost overwhelming the regiment. The British, however, though surrounded, fought back to back with the bayonet; and so close was the *mêlée* that the 40th were frightened to fire lest they should do as much injury to the 42d as to the enemy. It was in the cavalry charge that Sir Ralph Abercromby, who had ridden almost unattended to the right wing, received a mortal wound, and was unhorsed. While on the ground, a French dragoon galloped at him and attempted to cut him down; the General wrested the Frenchman's sword from him, but sustained severe contusions in the chest during the struggle, before a man of the 42d opportunely bayoneted his adversary. As the cavalry were repulsed, Sir Ralph walked to a redoubt on the right of the centre, and stayed there regardless of his wound during the remainder of the engagement. The Foreign Brigade, which had been kept in reserve under General Stuart, now came up, and the French were with great difficulty driven from the ruins of the Roman camp, with the loss of the standard of the Invincible battalion; and the British position on the right was once more secure. In the centre the French had fought at a much greater disadvantage, for the steady fire of the Guards had kept their in-

fantry columns at bay, although the British centre was itself exposed to a heavy and incessant fire from the French cannon. The left of the British line was not attacked, although it suffered considerably from the fusilades of the infantry, and from the distant fire of the dromedary corps. The last serious struggle took place on the British right, when both sides, having exhausted their ammunition, pelted each other with stones with deadly effect, until the grenadiers of the 40th advanced and drove the last of the French combatants from the field, as well as the sharpshooters whom Menou had scattered among the sandhills after the repulse of his columns. Menou shrank from hazarding a second dash on the British position, and withdrew in excellent order to the heights of Nicopolis, under a severe fire from Captain Maitland's gunboats, which had done admirable service during the action, although they had been under the range of the French infantry, who kept up a hot fire on the sailors. By ten o'clock in the forenoon the British victory was assured; and the gallant General Abercromby, who had remained in the redoubt issuing his orders and directing the operations, at last yielded to the effects of his wound, and fainted away. He was carried off in a hammock through the cheering ranks of the soldiers, and taken on board Lord Keith's flag-ship. Here Sir Ralph was subjected to a painful surgical operation, but the doctors failed to find the ball. Mortification soon after set in, and he died

on the evening of the 28th. His death was deeply lamented by the colleague with whom he had been for the preceding eight months so closely associated. Sir Ralph and Lord Keith had worked together in arranging the difficult and often delicate details of the expedition in a spirit of the utmost harmony, and with a single eye to the success of the British arms. Lord Keith in his letters feelingly records his sense of the loss that Britain had sustained in the death of one of her bravest generals; and ill as he could afford to spare a single ship, the Admiral despatched a war-vessel with his body to Malta, that his remains might rest under the protection of the British flag.

Major-General Hutchinson now succeeded to the command of the expedition on land with all the advantages which Sir Ralph Abercromby's intrepidity had opened up to the army. The loss of Sir Ralph, however, had the effect of keeping back the advance, which did not follow up the victory of the 21st so readily as the circumstances of the army required. Our troops were in the highest spirits. It was the first time since the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy that a British force had beaten the French in a fair field; and while our troops were greatly elated, the French were depressed in a corresponding degree. The battle of Alexandria had really decided the fate of the French in Egypt, if the British General had only recognised the fact. General Hutchinson was an

excellent tactician, as he subsequently proved; but he was no strategist, and apparently had great difficulty in comprehending the exact situation of the enemy. But although he did not press his advantage, he took every precaution to render the British position unassailable; and he speedily found, in the readiness with which supplies were forthcoming, the impression which the British victory had made upon the inhabitants of the country. The duties of the troops, however, were very severe, as there was every probability that the French, encouraged by the British inaction, would make a night attack upon their position.

On the evening of the 23d March, Sir Sidney Smith went under a flag of truce to the French outposts, and as he was not allowed to pass to the Commandant of Alexandria, he sent a message proposing that the French should evacuate Egypt and return to France, leaving their artillery, shipping, and stores in the hands of the British. This proposal was made in the name of Sir Ralph Abercromby and Lord Keith. What authority Sir Sidney had for assuming the character of an envoy we are at a loss to discover. Sir Ralph Abercromby was unable to act, and he certainly would not have regarded such terms as a proper sequel to his victory of the 21st; and we can find no evidence that Lord Keith was a consenting party to Sir Sidney's overtures. Indeed

there is abundant proof to show that Lord Keith would have been greatly opposed to any terms that would have permitted the French army to return to swell the forces of Buonaparte. We are inclined, therefore, to think that Sir Sidney again acted on his own responsibility, with the acquiescence, perhaps, of the British generals, who, ignorant of Egypt and the French situation, trusted to his local experience; but the contemptuous answer that he received from General Friant, left him no reason to congratulate himself on having taken the initiative. Lord Keith's journal has only the brief entry: "Refusal of a summons which had been addressed to General Friant, the Commandant of Alexandria." Another summons to surrender at discretion, to which Lord Keith consented, sent on the 28th, met with the same reception.

General Hutchinson, having lost his opportunity, shrank from an assault upon Alexandria with the force under his command; and on the 2d April, he detached a portion of his army to secure Rosetta. Lord Keith, on his part, was anxious that Alexandria should be pressed both by sea and land, or that at least another roadstead should be secured. After October it would be impossible for the fleet, many vessels of which were in no seaworthy condition, to remain close off the coast. On the same day as the troops marched from Rosetta, the Admiral and

the Capitan Pasha paid a visit to the British camp, and went over the field of the recent battle; and on the Admiral's return on board he found that the Pearl had arrived with despatches, announcing the sailing of the French fleet from Toulon. His lordship in consequence left Aboukir Bay with the line-of-battle ships to cruise off Alexandria, in expectation of the French descent.

On shore the chief operations were an attack upon the town and castle of Rosetta, which was taken possession of by Colonel Spencer, and the navigation of the Nile was thus opened up to the British gunboats. The fort of St Julien, lying between Rosetta and the sea, still continued to hold out, and was attacked simultaneously by the troops and by the British and Turkish gunboats, under Captain Curry of the Fury; but it was not until after a hot siege of three days that the French were brought to capitulate. Acting upon a hint in the papers of General Roize, found on his body on the field of Canopus, the British cut the canal of Alexandria and let the waters of the Mediterranean into Lake Mareotis. The low hills that shut out the sea were cut through, and the waters were admitted into the plain of the old lake. The inundation swept inwards with a terrible force, and a hundred and fifty hamlets are believed to have been overwhelmed in the floods. Alexandria was thus isolated from succours by land; but at the same time, the English

would only be able to attack the town by sea. General Hutchinson's plans, however, pointed towards pressing the French in the interior, and he trusted that Alexandria would succumb to the blockade; and on the 26th April he left for Rosetta, on his way up the Nile, leaving General Coote before Alexandria, and Lord Keith to conduct the blockade by sea. The Admiral had detached all the gunboats that he could spare for service on the Nile, and was himself waiting with great impatience for news, or the appearance, of Ganteaume's fleet. On the 20th April Sir John Warren with his squadron had joined Lord Keith, and reported having seen the French fleet off Sardinia, but they had been lost in the night. The condition of his vessels and men was a source of keen anxiety to Lord Keith, and he was compelled to reiterate his requests to the Admiralty for reinforcements. "The service," he writes on 11th May, "has already cost many valuable lives, and the constant fatigue for so long and unexpected a time, with the violent heat of the season, makes havoc among the men, equal to what shot did in the beginning. These circumstances justify my hope that their lordships will send out a supply of seamen and marines to render the squadron efficient, which in fact it is not at present, and cannot be considered to be without an addition of, at least, 400 seamen and 250 marines." Considering the imminent danger from Ganteaume's fleet, Lord Keith may be judged

to have acted with rash generosity in detaching so much of the naval strength to aid in the land operations; but he felt that if he could only get to close quarters with the enemy, he would gladly hazard a contest on the bravery of his reduced force.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FRENCH EVACUATION OF EGYPT.

1801.

THE removal of the theatre of active operations into the interior of Egypt in no way lessened the heavy burden of responsibility which Lord Keith was called upon to bear. The frequent despatches of the Admiralty impressed upon him the fact of which he was already sufficiently aware, that the whole success of the expedition depended upon the care which he exercised to prevent the French from making a descent upon the coast. The prospect of the appearance of Ganteaume's fleet was still a serious threat for an Admiral who had parted with a great portion of his disposable strength, and whose best vessels were far from seaworthy, to say nothing of their capabilities for engaging a powerful enemy. To add to his difficulties, Lord Keith had now to experience a new trouble, which had never before befallen him in the course of his long and varied service. We have touched slightly upon the jealousies which per-

vaded the Mediterranean fleet at the time when Lord Keith first appeared there as Earl St Vincent's lieutenant and destined successor, and we have seen the differences which Sir Sidney Smith's assumption of independent command had created. Lord Keith, while vindicating his own authority as Commander-in-Chief, had kept himself aloof from all the Mediterranean cliques; but now, at a time when his energies were taxed to the utmost, he was compelled to stand upon his own defence against a combination of the captains, who, with little regard to the exigencies of the service, and with still less respect for discipline, thought fit to foster old grievances upon a ground which he could not possibly ignore. To a commander who had always carried with him the goodwill and confidence of his subordinates in Europe, America, and the Cape, the complaints of the captains of the fleet were inexpressibly painful. They touched him, too, in a part where he was inclined to be most sensitive. Lord Keith, who, as a newly fledged captain, had bearded the Admiralty regarding the treatment of his sick and wounded sailors, and had not scrupled to exceed the allowances of the Medical Board at a time when such disobedience might have proved seriously detrimental to his prospects, was now accused by his captains of neglecting the sick and wounded of the fleet. A general requisition, signed by a number of the captains, was sent to him on this subject; and Lord Keith felt

compelled to make the following statement to the Admiralty, which deserves to be quoted, not merely as a defence of his conduct, but as throwing considerable light upon the administrative responsibilities which the Egyptian expedition had imposed upon him:—

"FOUDROYANT, OFF ALEXANDRIA,
13*th May* 1801.

"It was with much concern that I feel myself reduced to the necessity of requesting you to lay before their lordships copies of a correspondence which has passed between a number of the captains of the ships under my command and me, on an alleged inattention on my part to the necessities of the sick of this squadron; and before further animadversion, I shall proceed to enumerate the means I have used for providing refreshments of every kind for the use of this armament since its first arrival on this station, in order that their lordships may be enabled to determine whether reprehensions can attach to me, or, at all events, whether I have incurred it to such a degree as to give room for an attack from those serving under my command—so unprecedented, so disrespectful, and so subversive of that subordination and discipline which it is the peculiar duty of those in high rank to observe, for insuring the diffusion of them throughout all the gradations of officers and men.

"During my continuance at Minorca, from 10th August till the 31st, the state of fresh provisions there admitted of no appropriation but for the use of the sick; and a sufficiency of vegetables was regularly supplied with them, in compliance with the application of Mr Jefferson, the surgeon of the Foudroyant, who was directed by me, in company with two other surgeons, to visit the ships daily for that purpose and report to me.

"On the arrival of the armament at Gibraltar, and during its continuance there, the scanty stock which that place at all times affords, but particularly during the then prevalence of the plague on the coasts of Barbary, rendered it impossible to provide for the fleet; but an order was immediately issued to the agent victualler to make a provision for the sick as extensive as the state of the market could afford,—with which he complied. Green fruit, so necessary to the restoration of scorbutic patients, not being to be bought, I, in conjunction with the Governor, detained one neutral vessel with that article, and another of my own accord, by force; and so strong was my desire to provide for the relief of the sick, that, in directing those supplies to be procured, I submitted to the extortionate demand of fifteen Spanish dollars the chest, although they had been just put on board at Malaga for less than two. The consul at Toro and the agents of the victuallers at Lisbon were also directed to send large supplies,

the orders being despatched to them in triplicate by me; but their lordships' commands for proceeding to Egypt having been received on the 20th October, these necessary articles arrived too late, and I regretted only that a very considerable expense had been unavailingly incurred, as will have been reported to the Victualling Board by the agent victualler there.

"As soon after the fleet anchored in Tetuan Bay from the coast of Cadiz as I could receive any authentic accounts of the state of disease on the coast of Barbary, I ordered fresh beef, fruit, and vegetables to be furnished under the strictest precautions to the whole fleet, for the plague still prevailed; and from the 2d to the 8th November, 369 live cattle, near 28,000 lemons, oranges, and a considerable supply of different vegetables, were received, as will appear by the accounts thereof transmitted to the Victualling and Sick and Hurt Boards many months ago; and had the public service required that the fleet should have remained there, means were resorted to by me for procuring all the stock that the country could afford.

"Immediately on the receipt of their lordships' commands to proceed towards the Levant, I despatched a faithful and intelligent agent to the island of Sicily, with orders to purchase, amongst other indispensable supplies, 2000 live cattle and 4000 boxes of lemons, and directed transports to

be sent from Malta to carry them there; but although every expedition was made in the execution of this commission, little of either arrived at Malta before the armament left it, because the transports I had appointed for that service, as well as the country vessels that had been engaged, were shut up in the ports, and repeatedly forced back, by violent and contrary winds. Such of the cattle as could be procured (for it was one of the worst seasons for cattle ever known on the island) have been sent to Malta since that time, and the whole 4000 chests of lemons have been received in good preservation and distributed to the fleet. All the fresh beef that could be had at Malta was, however, procured, and a very considerable supply of fruit; and I was assured that there were not fifty disposable cattle left on the islands of Malta and Goza when I sailed from that place.

"Sure measures were taken for providing the armament with fresh supplies at the harbour of Macri; but the first division of the fleet being forced to take shelter in Marmorice, I determined on remaining there, as in many respects a preferable port, and reputed also to be the healthier of the two. Ships of war and transports were sent to Macri to bring round the cattle that had been provided there while any remained; and during my continuance on that coast, every encouragement was given by me to the inhabitants to bring us supplies, and a value

beyond the ordinary price of the country was punctually paid. About 3000 live cattle, such as the country could afford, being all that possibly could be had, were purchased during my continuance there; and nearly 500 goats were distributed gratuitously to the sick of the fleet, and about 160,000 lemons, when a want of that article was felt,—vouchers for all of which were transmitted to the proper offices, where reference can be made.

"I came to the coast of Egypt with the same inclination by which I had been influenced elsewhere; and as soon as there was a fair probability of procuring a sufficient supply of sheep and vegetables (for no cattle could be had) for the use of the sick and wounded, I directed it to be done. But so scanty and so uncertain was the supply, so distant the market, and so unsettled the state of the weather, that the persons sent to provide them were at no time less than two days absent in procuring from 100 to 150 sheep, at the unheard-of price in this country of near 9d. sterling per pound. It was, nevertheless, my intention to get what could be had, which amounted to about 640, before the fleet sailed from the bay, and which were distributed to the ships most in want; and when I found it necessary to proceed off this place myself, I directed the senior officer in Aboukir Bay to make a constant provision for the sick and wounded, supplied him with what money was necessary, and

directed him, when he required it, to apply to me for more. The sick and wounded in the ships at Aboukir I considered as entitled to the first attention; but I find by Captain Wilson's report that the constant occupation of the boats in the service of the army has rendered the purchase, bringing off, and distribution of the limited number he has been able to get, a work of infinite labour; and such discord and jarring have been excited between the officers of the two services as to the right of the market, that, to put an end to the altercations, I was reduced to the necessity of ordering the captain at that post to shift his situation if the disputes should continue. But as soon as Rosetta was possessed, and there was any probability of the fall of Rahmanie, and of the country being at liberty to bring forward their stock, I ordered a competent person to Rosetta for the express purpose of providing supplies and sending it to the ships in small vessels; and their lordships will perceive that I was in hourly expectation of it when I received the second letter, of which I think I have such just cause to complain. I am ready to admit that personal applications had been at times made to me by two or three of the officers in question, for directing the small vessels to go off Rosetta for stock at a time when I knew that it could not have been procured, and to which I certainly objected, because I have only had the Entreprenant

and Cruelle cutters, and the Goza and Rosa schooners, to employ in the frequent intercourses I have had to maintain with the Vizier, and in the more frequent communications I have been necessarily obliged to keep up with the army. Very serious inconveniences might have been incurred by their detention at Aboukir Bay, which must have ensued had they been devoted to that service, and they would have been subjected to the risk of total loss in approaching to Rosetta bar. Besides, I daresay their lordships will not conclude that a commander-in-chief is under the necessity of making known on every occasion his motives to those who serve under his command.

"I was not at liberty to devote troop-ships to the purpose of seeking stock. On the first intelligence of the arrival of Ganteaume in these seas, General Hutchinson required that they should be held in constant readiness to re-embark the troops in case of need; and this was a point too important and delicate to be unregarded by me, and, except for the indispensable article of water till we got possession of the Nile, two or three of these vessels only have ever been employed on that necessary duty. Feeling as well as the captains of the squadron the want of refreshments for the sick and the well, I wrote to the General on the 4th instant, stating that if he would say there was no prospect of a re-embarkation being forced upon me, I would employ the troop-

ships in procuring supplies; and having received no particular answer from him to the question, I ventured on embracing the first occasion, after receiving intelligence of the enemy's retreat from El-Aft to Rahmanie, to detach two frigates in quest of live-stock; one to Derneh, where I have many doubts of being able to procure it—and the other to Acre, which I could only consider open to us from a letter I had received from the Pasha Gezzar, mentioning his reconciliation to the Capitan Pasha the day before.

"I have no doubt that all the officers have felt the irksome and tedious nature of the service on which we are employed. But I know where the weight of it has lain. I need hardly call to their lordships' consideration the fatigue of body and the anxiety of mind, to which the charge of this important armament for so long a time, and under circumstances of almost every disadvantage, and an attention to the duties of all other parts of the station, must have naturally subjected me; and it might have reasonably been expected that the captains participating with me in their country's service, would have been inclined to alleviate my labour instead of accumulating the load; and more particularly on a subject of this kind, which, while it cannot be viewed in a more favourable light than indirect censure from them, must have a tendency to impress upon the minds of the seamen (for a transaction of this kind cannot be

concealed) that their Admiral has been regardless of their wants. Many individual applications, sir, besides these, have been made to me, which I have found it proper and necessary to resist. But the present is a popular and a plausible topic, on which the best arguments might be ineffectually employed; but I trust that their lordships will be persuaded that I have lived too long amongst seamen to be insensible to their wants or unconscious of their value; and that, although from the sailing of the squadron till 4th May (the date of the remonstrance in question), the nature of the public service has not admitted of much means of supply, it could neither be imputed to a want of humanity on my part, nor furnish sufficient grounds for the censure the captains have thought themselves authorised to bestow; and I think that it will not escape their lordships' attention how peculiarly extraordinary the participation of those who arrived with Rear-Admiral Sir John Warren has been, who, till the date of the first letter, had only been fourteen days with the fleet—during several of those at sea, and some of them having hardly a sick man on board their ships.

"I am as unwilling, sir, as any man can be, to treat with levity a subject of so serious a nature as the sufferings of my fellow-creatures, and in a particular manner those whose lives are so useful to the State; but I think it necessary to enclose an abstract of the state of the sick, taken from the weekly

accounts preceding and succeeding the resolution of the captains, and remarks from the weekly reports of the surgeons, from which it will not appear that any sickness, alarming either in nature or extent, has prevailed except in the Kent, and she has been ordered to Aboukir Bay to receive refreshments and be cleaned, and I have no doubt will return here in a few days. Before concluding, I observe, in consequence of Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Bickerton's name having been referred to in the last letter I received from the captains, I made an application to him, of which a copy is enclosed as well as of Sir Richard's reply, on which I shall not comment further than by remarking, that whether the measure of providing for the sick and wounded after 20th March originated on this occasion with Sir Richard Bickerton or with me, by whom it had been conducted before, it appears from different passages of his letter that it was my intention to do so, which is the fact; nor have I ceased in my endeavours. Live sheep, as far as I could obtain them, have been issued to the sick and wounded on board the ships in the bay, from 27th March till this time, because they were most in want. My desire has been to make the same provision here, and it will be forthwith carried into effect. Besides, such was the nature of the beach from which they would in this case have been drawn, that the Fulminante cutter parted her cables, and was lost upon it only a few days before; and Captain Mait-

land her commander and crew narrowly escaped with their lives, and I was obliged to order the other armed vessels from it to save them from a similar fate.

"I must maintain my opinion that the first letter, written by the Honourable Captain Cochrane, Captain Louis, and Captain Morton, was an interference highly improper on their parts, as it was the duty of every individual captain to have made the wants of his ship known to me in the ordinary course of the service, and not by forming themselves into a body and sending a delegation to regulate my conduct, particularly when some of the ships were almost without sick on board, and no pretence whatever could be offered for their captains resorting to such a resolution, or for the others appearing unnecessarily on their part. I lay their correspondence before their lordships, in full confidence of their seeing the propriety of maintaining the subordination and discipline necessary for the support of the naval service, and can have no doubt that the uniform desire which I have evinced for providing every necessary supply for this armament, when it could possibly be provided, will lead them to be persuaded that I have not lost sight of the necessity of making due provision on the present occasion; and that it has only been by the want of the indispensable means for so doing, that it was not immediately carried into effect.

"The decision of their lordships on this occasion cannot fail to be considered as either an admission or disavowal of the privilege which this combination of officers have claimed, and persist in supporting; and as it is a subject that interests the public service infinitely more than it can do me, I leave it with full confidence in their lordships' hands.—I have the honour to be, &c., KEITH."

We have quoted this long letter in all its details, written as it was in evident haste, and in the midst of most pressing duties, less from a feeling that there is any need to exculpate Lord Keith from the complaints of the combination, than that it sets forth at length the manifold nature of the tasks which the naval conduct of the Egyptian expedition imposed upon its commanders. The duties which now fall to the lot of numerous responsible officers in high rank, were all centred in Lord Keith personally. He was his own controller, victualler, contract and purchase agent, director of transports, and director of works, and had the charge of a force on active service, and the responsibility for the general command of the Mediterranean fleet resting upon him as well. Only great administrative ability and long experience could have enabled him to cope with the exigencies of his situation; and of these qualities the Admiralty were well assured, for since his arrival in the Mediterranean he had been repeatedly in-

trusted by the Government with the duty of making extensive purchases of grain and stores to be used in other departments of the public service. Of Lord Keith's disposition to study the wants of the squadron, the officers had again and again had opportunities of satisfying themselves, and we can only attribute their conduct on this occasion to feelings lying entirely apart from the ostensible circumstances of complaint. This opinion is strongly confirmed by another altercation which arose at this time with Captain Hallowell of the Swiftsure, regarding the price of shoes supplied to his sailors, which Lord Keith referred to the Admiralty. The Lords were not disposed to enter into the merits of the dispute; but Lord Keith, with characteristic pertinacity, insisted upon an official justification of his conduct, even in so trifling a matter. For nearly four years he carried on the discussion when he had a moment's leisure, meeting every fresh statement of Captain Hallowell by a crushing rejoinder, and writing as many letters as would fill a goodly-sized volume, until at last their lordships, driven into a corner, decided the matter entirely in his favour in the summer of 1804. The incident is a trifling one, but it is illustrative of Lord Keith's tenaciousness of justice.

Lord Keith's prospects were now, however, on the point of clearing, as the successful operations of the British in the interior continued to insure a speedy reduction of the French positions, and the misadven-

tures of Ganteaume removed the dread of Menou being succoured from France. That unlucky Admiral had embarked 4000 men at Brest early in January, and a secret landing-place west of Alexandria had been fixed on where the troops might be debarked. He had managed to evade Lord St Vincent's blockaders, putting to sea on 23d January, and entered the Mediterranean while the English cruisers sailed in a vain quest after him in the direction of the West Indies. But then his good fortune deserted him. Instead of making for Egypt, to which he might have steered an uninterrupted course, he stood to the north, and was scared by Admiral Warren's small squadron into Toulon harbour. From this he sailed for Egypt on 22d March, and got as far as Cape Carbonara, whence his presence had been reported by Admiral Warren to Lord Keith, when an accident to his fleet, two of his vessels having fouled each other with mutual damage, filled him with such alarm that he again put back to Toulon, which he reached on 5th April. Indignant at these failures, Buonaparte despatched pressing orders to Ganteaume to lose no time in sailing; and the Admiral again left Toulon on 27th April, and passed unmolested through the Straits of Messina on 25th May. At midnight on 7th June, while Lord Keith was lying off Alexandria in a state of preparation for putting to sea at the shortest notice to meet Ganteaume, the Pique, Captain Young, arrived from

the south-west, where she had been stationed with the Déterminée and the Termagant to watch the enemy's approach, with the intelligence that four sail of the French line had been observed steering in the direction of the Egyptian coast. The French had given chase to the Pique, but could not come up with her; and Captain Young conjectured that they could not be more than thirty leagues off. Orders were at once issued to the British and Turkish fleets to be ready to sail prepared for battle at daybreak; but before they had weighed, the Vestal, which had been sent to Derneh for cattle, was next seen coming in with signals flying that she had been chased by the enemy. Lord Keith distributed his cruisers in all directions, and stationed some of the ships of war considerably to the westward, the direction in which the French might be expected to appear. These latter captured two vessels with 120 soldiers on board; but a small corvette was mistaken by the fleet for one of the English cruisers, and managed to get into the harbour of Alexandria. Lord Keith learned from the prisoners that Ganteaume's intention had been to disembark the troops at Cape Rossa; but that, having sighted the coast at Lacuste, above forty-three leagues to the westward, they were preparing to disembark there when the sight of English ships in the offing induced Ganteaume to cut his cables and stand out to sea, thinking he was in presence of Lord Keith's squadron.

Lord Keith's main apprehension was that the French squadron might fall in with the Swiftsure, which he had sent home as unfit for service in charge of a convoy a few days before; and his fears were unfortunately realised. Captain Hallowell of the Swiftsure encountered the French squadron off Cape Derneh on 24th June, and after a spirited resistance to three of Ganteaume's largest vessels, was compelled to surrender, Captain Hallowell receiving great compliments from the French Admiral for his bravery.

Lord Keith being satisfied of the timidity of Ganteaume, contented himself with remaining off Alexandria, and with despatching Sir Richard Bickerton with a considerable portion of the squadron to cruise along the coast as far as the scene of the intended French disembarkation, in case of an endeavour to make another landing. Sir Richard returned on 14th June with intelligence that the enemy had certainly quitted the coast; and that, from the malignant fever which was raging on board the French fleet, it was more than likely they would have to put back to Toulon. Thus Lord Keith's prime source of anxiety for the success of the expedition was finally removed, and cheering reports from General Hutchinson and the Grand Vizier were now becoming more and more frequent.

On the 18th June, Lord Keith writes a private letter to Mr Addington, speaking of the slowness of

the British operations, and representing the French as greatly divided among themselves, and desirous only of a good pretext to surrender :—

"General Damas was banished by Menou, and had been taken by our cruisers, and was loud in his abuse of Menou." "You will see," Lord Keith goes on, "that Ganteaume came on the coast a few days ago and anchored, and examined the shore, cut his cables, and stood out to sea. He ordered the small transports to Alexandria under care of a corvette, which got in in spite of the Hector's fire. The transports are taken. Finding the French only four sail of the line and one large frigate, I divided the squadron, and sent Sir Richard Bickerton fifty leagues to the west, while I remain off the port to take both chances if they chose to return. It is too clear we are not active. Our army are advanced within twenty miles of Cairo in twenty-eight days; the French marched it in two. Yet in the end, if the fleet does not escape me, we cannot fail. The plague decreases, and in a few days the water will begin to increase, which will render our communication more safe and frequent. At present I am obliged to bring fresh water from Cyprus and Caramania."

In the middle of April the tardy forces of the Grand Vizier had at last been put in motion, and compelled the French to fall back from the Syrian frontier. Hutchinson, on his part, was hastening to push up the Nile with a view to invest Cairo. On

the 9th May, the British, with their Ottoman auxiliaries, drove the French, after a sharp action, from Rahmanie, a point on the Nile where the canal of Alexandria branches off, and compelled La Grange, who was in command, to fall back upon Cairo. The Grand Vizier at the same time advancing upon Cairo, defeated General Belliard at El Hanka, and forced him also to take refuge in the old capital of Egypt. The road was now clear for both General Hutchinson and the Vizier, and the two forces having joined, were able to invest the town on the 20th June. Cut off from all communication with Alexandria, distrusting the generalship of Menou, and doubtful of succours from France, the French generals could not have been expected to offer a determined defence; and on the 22d terms of capitulation were offered, and, after negotiations which continued until the 27th, accepted by the British and Turkish commanders.

It was not until 7th July that Lord Keith was informed of the capitulation of Cairo; and welcome as the news was, he felt that the mode in which the convention had been concluded implied a slight upon his own branch of the service, which he was in duty bound to resent. In all the operations in the interior, a considerable force of sailors and marines had borne a valuable and gallant part, and Lord Keith himself had been represented by Captain Stevenson of the Europa, the senior naval officer with the

expedition. In every one of the actions that had occurred in the interior, the boats of the flotilla had received the General's acknowledgments; but in the negotiations for the capitulation, General Hutchinson entirely overlooked the fact that Lord Keith, as naval Commander-in-Chief, ought to have been made a party to them through his representative, Captain Stevenson. Having, as he always had, the honour of his own service deeply at heart, Lord Keith very promptly called the attention of both the Admiralty and General Hutchinson to the informality; and though it was too late to remedy the mistake, due explanations were made. An unfortunate irregularity seemed to attach to conventions in Egypt, which it was Lord Keith's unpleasant duty to have to rectify.

It was as well for the French that Lord Keith was left a stranger to the capitulation convention, for the Admiral was more fully possessed of the views under which the expedition had been undertaken than General Hutchinson appears to have been, and was too alive to the dangers which must spring from the addition of the army of Egypt to the forces of the First Consul, to have granted such liberal terms for evacuating the country as those his colleague had conceded. He determined, however, to loyally carry out the articles of convention, the chief strain of which fell upon himself. While redoubled exertions had now to be applied to the reduction of Alexandria

both by sea and land, the Admiral had at the same time to provide means for transporting to France the garrison and employees, numbering over 12,000 men, who had surrendered at Cairo, "with their arms, artillery, baggage, and effects,"—paraphernalia which it went greatly against Lord Keith's grain to have to provide carriage for. While the troops from Cairo were on their way down to Rosetta, Menou made an effort to get rid of a number of his non-combatants in Alexandria, and sent a brig out of the harbour, under cartel flags, with a large company of *savants*, members of the Institut and of the Commissions des Sciences et Artes, who wished to get home with their archæological booty. "But as I did not consider it proper," says Lord Keith, in his report to the Admiralty, "to allow any person whatever to depart from a town long since blockaded, and I hope immediately to be besieged, I have advised them all to return; and acquainted General Menou that I shall observe a similar conduct towards the invalids and blind, if he sends them out as proposed in his despatches." With grim humour the Admiral offered to surrender to him a company of French comedians, who, sent by the French Government to enliven the garrison of Alexandria, had been captured by the British cruisers; but Menou obstinately refused to accept this addition to his garrison. So actively, however, did his lordship expedite matters for the despatch of the garrison of Cairo, that he

was able to announce to the Admiralty on 21st July,—"The transports for the reception of the French corps from Cairo are far advanced in preparation, and will be ready before they arrive at Rosetta; notwithstanding, we suffer much interruption by the almost constant swell and impracticability of the bar." The embarkation began on 1st August, and was completed, in spite of the enormous quantity of baggage, within eight days; and the convoy, consisting of six of his Majesty's ships and nearly fifty British and Turkish transports, was despatched without delay.

General Hutchinson did not wait until Belliard's force was embarked, but, leaving Sir David Baird with the Indian reinforcements—which arrived too late to participate in the operations against Cairo—to garrison the town, pressed on with the bulk of his troops to join the camp at Alexandria, which had been considerably strengthened in his absence by reinforcements from England; and the siege was now pressed in earnest. We shall quote Lord Keith's account of its progress and issue:—

"The General, who did me the honour of spending some days with me while the embarkation of the French was going on, resolved on transporting by Lake Mareotis, to the westward of Alexandria, a column of about 5000 men, under the orders of Major-General Coote, to divide the enemy's force and attention, to invest the town closely on that side, and

to cut off all further hope of reinforcement or supplies by land. On the 12th I proceeded to Lake Mareotis with Lieutenant-Colonel Anstruther, the Quartermaster-General, to examine the enemy's position on the side of the lake, and the strength of the flotilla they had assembled there; and having ascertained that their armed force could be easily subdued, and that a debarkation could be effected with little or no difficulty, the General determined to carry the measure into immediate effect. To secure the landing from interruption, Captain Stevenson, of the Europa, who is continued in the command of the flotilla, was forthwith directed to take a station in front of the gunboats and armed boats which the enemy had assembled on the lake (and drawn up in line under the protection of batteries thrown up for their defence), to keep them in check until they could be seized or destroyed. On the evening of the 16th, all the boats of the ships of war and transports in this bay were assembled in the Mareotis, with as many *germs* (native boats) as could be collected from the Nile, for the purpose of succouring the troops, who were embarked in the night, and landed without opposition the next morning, under the superintendence of Captain Elphinstone, considerably farther to the westward than was intended, the wind not admitting of the boats reaching the shore nearer to the town. The enemy, seeing no prospect left of saving their armed boats, set fire to and blew them all up in the

course of this and the following day, except two or three which have fallen into our hands. Whilst the landing was carrying into effect, Captain Sir William Sidney Smith, of the Tigre, was directed with some sloops of war and armed boats to make a demonstration of attack upon the town.

"On the night of the 17th, Major-General Coote was enabled to establish batteries against Marabout, a small fortified island that protects the entrance into the great harbour of Alexandria on the western side, and distant from the town about seven or eight miles, which for many reasons it was important to possess. Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Bickerton, having the command of the squadron blockading the ports, directed armed launches from the ships to co-operate with the troops; and the garrison, consisting of nearly 200 men, unequal to further resistance, surrendered as prisoners of war on the evening of the 21st. Mr Hall, midshipman, and one seaman of the Ajax, were killed on this service, and two seamen of the Northumberland wounded.

"On the afternoon of the same day the Rear-Admiral ordered the Cynthia, Port Mahon, Victorien, and Bonne Citoyenne, with three Turkish corvettes, to proceed into the harbour, under the direction of the Hon. Captain Cochrane, of the Ajax (a channel having been previously surveyed with great industry and precision by Lieutenant Withers, of the Kent); and on the morning of the 22d, Major-General

Coote's detachment moved forward four or five miles on the narrow isthmus leading to the town, formed by the Mareotis or inundation on the south side, and the harbour on the north; Captain Stevenson, with the gun-vessels on the lake, covering the right flank —and Captain Cochrane, with the sloops of war and armed boats, protecting their left. The position which the Major-General took up and that occupied by our little squadron, which has since been reinforced by the Diane, completed the blockade of the town. The Rear-Admiral gives great commendation to the Hon. Captain Cochrane for the zealous and judicious manner in which he executed the service intrusted to him.

"Soon after our ships entered the harbour the enemy sank several vessels between our advanced ships and their vessels in the port, to obstruct our farther progress to the eastward, and moved their frigates and corvettes from Fig-Tree Point close up to the town.

"General Menou, finding himself closely pressed on the eastward of the town by the Commander-in-Chief, who had carried some of the enemy's important redoubts and established strong batteries against their intrenched lines, and on the western side by Major-General Coote, who had during the preceding night driven in several of their outposts and advanced close up to an important position which the enemy seemed conscious of being unable to de-

fend, sent out on the evening of the 26th proposals of an armistice of three days, to arrange terms of capitulation.

"*2d September.* — A capitulation has been this day signed, providing for the delivery to the Allies to-morrow of the enemy's intrenched camp on the eastern side of Alexandria, and the Fort Triangulaire and other important parts on the western side; and for that of the town itself, the public effects, and the shipping in the harbour, at the expiration of ten days, or sooner if the enemy's troops can be sooner embarked. The merchant-vessels are very numerous, and one old Venetian ship of the line, with the French frigates Egyptienne, Justice, and Régénérée, with some corvettes, are known to be in the port."

"Their lordships will not fail to have observed,' writes Lord Keith, in his despatch dated 2d September, informing the Admiralty of the capitulation of Alexandria, "from my former details, the meritorious conduct of the officers and men who have been from time to time employed on the various duties which the debarkation of the army, and a co-operation with it, have required. Though opportunities for brilliant exertion have been few since the 8th March, the desire for participating in them has been unremitting; but the nature of this expedition has demanded much of the officers and seamen of the fleet, and particularly from those of the troop-ships, bomb-vessels, and transports, the endurance of

labour, fatigue, and privation, far beyond what I have witnessed before, and which I verily believe to have exceeded all former example; and it has been encountered and surmounted with a degree of resolution and perseverance which earns my highest praise, and gives both officers and men a just claim to the protection of their lordships and the approbation of their country. The number of the officers to whom I owe this tribute of approbation does not admit of my mentioning them by name, but most of the captains of the troop-ships have been employed in the superintendence of these duties, and I have had repeated and urgent offers of voluntary service from all. The agents for transports have conducted themselves with laudable diligence and activity in the service of the several departments to which they are attached, and displayed the greatest exertion and ability in overcoming the numerous difficulties with which they had to contend. The captains and commanders of the ships appointed for guarding the port, have executed that tedious and anxious duty with diligence and success. During my frequent absence from the squadron, the blockade has been conducted much to my satisfaction by Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Bickerton; and justice requires me to mention, that when I was with the squadron, Captain Wilson of the Trinity was unwearied in his attention to the direction of all the duties of this bay.

"The Capitan Pasha has uniformly manifested the

most anxious desire of contributing by every means in his power to the promotion of the service. Having been generally on shore with his troops, the ships have been submitted by his orders to my direction, and the officers have paid the most respectful attention on all occasions to the instructions they have received from me.

"Captain Sir Sidney Smith, who has served with such distinguished reputation in this country, having applied to be the bearer of the despatches announcing the expulsion of the enemy, I have complied with his request, and I beg to refer their lordships to that active and intelligent officer for any particular information relative to this or other parts of the country on which he has had opportunities of making remarks.—I have the honour to be, &c.,

"KEITH.

"EVAN NEPEAN, Esq."

Thus was brought to a successful termination the most onerous and trying expedition in which Lord Keith during his long service had been engaged, and which owed its fortunate conclusion, in a very great degree, to his personal exertions and administrative ability. Indeed, the idea of an expedition to Egypt may be said to have originated with Lord Keith; for as early as December 1799, Lord Keith had pressed upon Dundas the necessity of employing "a respectable European force," "which would give confidence

to the Turks, and preserve their engagements even should they be wavering, or their Ministers corrupted, which is so often the case in that country;" and it was due almost solely to Dundas's representations that the British Ministry undertook to drive the French from Egypt by European troops. The service was of such a description as no one of Lord Keith's contemporaries in the navy was so well fitted by experience to perform. The most important duties which devolved on him had been discharged in conjunction with military operations, and his thorough appreciation of the best modes in which the exertions of an army could be supplemented by a fleet, rendered his presence at Alexandria of essential value. His despatches attest how readily he made the resources of the fleet, and the conveniences of his own command, subservient to the necessities of the troops. In announcing the accomplishment of the objects of the expedition, General Hutchinson writes thus to the Secretary of State: "I cannot conclude this letter without stating to your lordship the many obligations I have to Lord Keith and the navy, for the great exertions they have used in forwarding us the necessary supplies, and from the fatigue they have undergone in the late embarkation of a considerable number of troops and stores, who were embarked on the new lake, and proceeded to the westward under the orders of Major-General Coote. The utmost despatch has also been

used in sending the French troops lately captured to France, which, in our present position, was a service of the most essential consequence." Something more might with justice have been said regarding the share the navy had in the blockade and in the final operations against Alexandria; but the British Ministry had no difficulty in forming for itself an estimate of the part Lord Keith had taken in the Egyptian expedition, and in adequately expressing its appreciation of the assistance he had rendered in securing the success of our arms.

CHAPTER XVII.

RETURN FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN.

1801–1802.

THE surrender of Alexandria left Lord Keith free to break up the blockading squadron; and it was not before time, for the season was close at hand when ships could with difficulty have been kept in station on the Egyptian coast. His satisfaction at this release was not lessened by the temper which several of the officers serving under his command had shown towards himself personally, and by the advantage which they had not scrupled to take of the perplexities of the Commander-in-Chief's situation. We have already referred to some of the pretexts under which complaints were put forward, in a manner that the Admiral could not but consider to be subversive of discipline; and these were not the only instances in which attempts were made to thwart his arrangements. The withdrawal of a number of officers from their ships, to do duty with the land forces, naturally disorganised the commands, and had a tendency to

relax discipline on shipboard, which Lord Keith was anxious to counteract. Exception, however, was taken to officers holding provisional commands under the Admiral's appointment conducting courts-martial; and his lordship, who was thoroughly master of naval law, drew up a report to the Admiralty on the subject, and requested the opinion of counsel on the points at issue. What answer, if any, the Admiralty returned, we have been unable to discover; but there could not have been two opinions upon the necessity which Lord Keith urged of enforcing strict discipline while so important an undertaking was going on. Shortly before the fall of Alexandria, Lord Keith was exposed to another instance of this opposition from the same quarter whence previous attacks had been directed against him. Captain Beaver had served down to the middle of June on the Admiral's appointment as assistant-captain of the fleet, but the Admiralty thought fit to disallow his position, and Lord Keith granted him leave to go home. At the same time, his lordship took the opportunity of remonstrating with the Admiralty regarding the severity of the strain to which his own energies were exposed. He notified to them that he had appointed Captain John Elphinstone of the Hector—who had been his flag-captain on board the Monarch in the expedition to the Cape, and of whose ability and merits he had often received signal proofs—to be first captain of the fleet,

and solicited their lordships' confirmation of his nomination.

On the afternoon of the 24th July, while Lord Keith, with the Foudroyant, was lying in the Bay of Aboukir, a serious accident occurred in the fleet off Alexandria. While a reinforcement of cavalry, which had arrived the previous day, was being landed, the Ajax, Hector, and Diane ran aboard each other with serious damage. The Diane lost her foremast, while the Hector's head and cutwater were carried entirely away, and the Ajax lost her galleries on the starboard side. Lord Keith, anxious to discover where the blame of this disaster rested, lost no time in ordering a court-martial, over which he directed Captain Elphinstone to preside as first captain of the fleet; but objection was at once taken to the legality of the appointment, although it was still an open question whether or not the Admiralty would confirm him in his position. The Admiral, as he was without a precedent for his guidance, waived his right of enforcing his orders on this occasion; but he was at no loss to comprehend the spirit in which the objection had been raised; and it must have been with a feeling of relief that he saw the time approaching when he would be able to disperse the fleet, and dissolve a combination that had attacked him on public grounds to gratify personal prejudice.

In the middle of September he received "most

secret orders" from the Admiralty to proceed as soon as practicable to Malta, and co-operate with Lieutenant-General Fox, commanding there. In the negotiations for peace which were then going on, the question of the future of Malta was a hotly debated point; and as England was desirous to retain the island in her own possession, it was essential that our occupation should be rendered as secure as possible. Lord Keith had anticipated his orders by already sailing in that direction, and had been four days at sea when the Admiralty despatch reached him. The original intention of the Government had been to land 1700 of the British troops from Egypt at Corfu, but the approach of peace induced the Ministry to concentrate its energies on the preservation of Malta. His lordship left Sir Richard Bickerton in command on the coast of Egypt, but remembering the difficulties which had previously arisen in the case of Sir Sidney Smith regarding the position of the Egyptian squadron, he was careful to require that the Admiralty should define Sir Richard Bickerton's rank, but recommended at the same time that it should be such as would command the respect of the Turks.

On his arrival at Valetta, Lord Keith received intelligence that the Admiralty, taking into consideration the arduous duties imposed upon him by the Egyptian expedition, had resolved to lighten his command by relieving him of the coast from Finis-

terre to the Straits. Now that the great strain which the military operations had imposed, was removed, Lord Keith was not disposed to accept a curtailment of his duties. On the 8th October he thus replies to the Secretary of the Admiralty: "I request you will be pleased to acquaint their lordships that I am sensibly impressed with the nature of the explanation which they have condescended, in terms so flattering, to make to me on the adoption of a measure which they have been convinced was consistent with the advantage of the public service; and I have the pleasure of acquainting you for their information, that I am now thus far on my way down the Mediterranean, and after putting the ships of the line in a condition to keep the sea, so far as the resources of the yard at Malta will enable me to do it, I shall repair to Mahon, leaving here a force sufficient to cover this island, to communicate with Alexandria, and keep the vessels the enemy has in the Atlantic in check. At Minorca I shall make arrangements for stationing a force sufficient for protecting that island, for watching the division of Ganteaume's squadron that remains at Toulon, and for executing any detached duties that may be required. I shall therefore proceed to Gibraltar or off Cadiz, as necessity may require, with the remainder of the disposable force, and there obey such further orders and instructions as their lordships may be pleased to transmit to me."

While the Admiral was busy in making preparations for the defence of Malta against an expected descent of the French from the coast of Calabria, where 20,000 men were reported to be assembling, he received intelligence of the preliminaries of peace having been arranged. This, however, did not lessen the assiduity with which he sought to strengthen the sea-defences of the island, and to put the port into a condition that would make it serviceable as a naval station. He had no belief in the maintenance of peace while the power of Buonaparte remained unbroken; and the Admiralty, by the care which they took to impress upon him the necessity of observing the conditions of the preliminaries, must have felt that it would be no easy task to reconcile the Admiral to them; although their lordships had taken care to give him early notice of the stipulations that were likely to be agreed on. It was not, however, until the end of November that he received formal notice of the conclusion of the preliminaries, which were signed at London on 1st October; and in the interval he had employed his time so well as to have his fleet put in as thorough repair as the resources of Malta would admit of, and have the naval defences of the island placed in a sufficiently reliable condition. In spite of the peace, he urged that the Mediterranean fleet should be permitted to remain on a war footing; and he cautioned the Admiralty that it was expedient to take into their plans for

dealing with his command, the possibility, at no distant date, of future combined operations. He ordered Captain Ryves of the Agincourt to garrison Corfu, and resist the introduction of any French force from the side of the Adriatic into that island; and all his arrangements, though keeping strictly within the letter of the stipulations, showed that he looked upon the peace as merely an armistice, as indeed it soon proved to be.

On 7th November Lord Keith received, through his friend the Capitan Pasha, the insignia of the Ottoman Order of the Crescent for himself, and medals for the naval officers who had served under him in the Egyptian expedition. In the following month he had the pleasure of investing his colleague, Sir John Hely Hutchinson, with the order of Knighthood of the Bath, in the midst of an assemblage of the officers of the army and of the fleet, and of the Maltese nobility. A little later on he was apprised of the cordial reception which had been extended by the Government to the part which he had played in the Egyptian expedition. In the speech from the throne on 29th October, his Majesty had alluded to "the distinguished valour and eminent services of my forces by sea and land, which at no period have been surpassed. . . . And I am persuaded you will join with me in reflecting with peculiar satisfaction on the naval and military operations of the last campaign, and on the successful and glorious issue of

the expedition to Egypt, which has been marked throughout by achievements, tending in their consequences, and by their example, to produce lasting advantages and honour to the country." In the House of Lords, on 12th November, Lord Hobart, in the absence of Lord St Vincent, moved a vote of thanks to Lord Keith and the navy, which was seconded by Lord Nelson, who said that "their services were of a double nature, yet of equal importance. It fell to the lot of the army to fight, and of the navy to labour. They had equally performed their duty, and were equally entitled to thanks." A similar vote unanimously passed the Commons, which was followed on 19th November by a resolution of the city of London to confer its freedom on Lord Keith, and to present him with a sword of the value of a hundred guineas. The crowning recognition of his services, however, was still to come; and on the 15th December his lordship was advanced to the dignity of a peerage of the United Kingdom, with limitation to heirs male, as Baron Keith of Stonehaven Marischal in the county of Kincardine, —a choice of title which still further testified to the affection in which he held the memory of his great uncle the Earl Marischal.

While at Valetta in the winter of 1801, Lord Keith had to mourn the loss of his kinsman Captain Elphinstone, who had been so long associated with his fortunes, and whom he had appointed assistant-

captain of the fleet—a post which the Admiralty, jealous of its own patronage, had refused to confirm. Captain Elphinstone, who had served with great distinction under Lord Keith at the Cape, had merited a large share of the Admiral's confidence and affection; and his death had been accelerated by the severe strain of the onerous duties which he had had to discharge at Alexandria.

The Admiral remained at Valetta until 5th March 1802, busied in carrying out the arrangements which the conditions of peace imposed upon him, and preparing for the evacuation of our conquests in the Mediterranean. Egypt was to be given up to the Porte, and Malta to the Knights of St John, who by that time could only have resumed their sovereignty as vassals of Russia; Elba and Minorca were to be evacuated, and the Ionian Islands to be recognised as a republic. Lord Keith never believed in the permanence of the peace, an opinion which was shared by the most experienced statesmen at home. He saw that it would be almost impossible for Britain and the Republic to come to a satisfactory agreement as to the future of Malta, and he appears to have taken his measures in a firm conviction that that island would remain a possession of the Crown of England—a course which events speedily justified. He foresaw also that the Ionian republic, if left to itself, must speedily fall under French domination, and he took advantage of the hatred

which the inhabitants manifested towards the French to afford them protection against the influence of Buonaparte's emissaries. In November 1801 he had sent Captain Ryves of the Agincourt, with two other vessels, to Corfu, in order that their presence might have a tendency to preserve peace until the negotiations were finally ratified, and might frustrate any attempts suddenly made by the French for throwing into the islands any part of the force which they had on the coast of the Adriatic in case of a rupture in the negotiations. The British vessels were received with great cordiality by the Ionians, and at the request of the President of the Senate, Captain Martin, in pursuance of the policy Lord Keith had prescribed to him, landed a number of seamen and marines to support the Government against a faction inimical to the new constitution. These measures were warmly approved of by the Government, and his lordship received a despatch commending the policy which he had adopted, and directing him to persevere in the same course.

The Admiral arrived at Gibraltar on the 20th March 1802, and was speedily immersed in the politics of the western Mediterranean, which had been rather complicated than settled by the peace. The African regencies were, as usual, giving trouble, throwing obstacles in the way of provisioning our ships, blustering while we were at a distance, and

lavish of promises of good conduct and friendly assistance on the least display of force, while all the time they were intriguing with the French emissaries, who haunted the cities to the south of the Mediterranean. Spain, too, was sulky; and Lord Keith soon after his arrival had to take the Spanish authorities to task for their bearing towards some of his vessels that had put into Cadiz. "The Spanish Government," he writes to the Admiralty, "appear to have adopted a fixed resolution of denying to his Majesty's officers who may enter that port the common privileges and indulgences which I understand are awarded to those of other nations who resort there, particularly those of America and France. I have felt it incumbent upon me to remonstrate with the Governor of Cadiz on the subject, and have also written to the Secretary of State charged with the Marine Department. . . . It will remain with their lordships to determine on the propriety of taking further measures for procuring the removal of the partial and offensive restrictions imposed on his Majesty's ships, which cannot fail to affect the honour of his Majesty's flag, and lessen the respectability of his officers in the eyes of all who view the pointedly illiberal and injurious treatment to which they are exposed."

While Lord Keith was at Gibraltar his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent arrived there to command the garrison. He was accompanied by his

brother the Duke of Sussex, and much pleasant intercourse took place between the two royal dukes and the Admiral. The Duke of Sussex, however, soon went back to Lisbon. Lord Keith had some time previously signified to the Admiralty his desire to be relieved of his command, and to return to England, and he only waited at Gibraltar for the sanction of their lordships to demit his office. He received information of the signature of the definitive treaty of peace on the 22d April; but it was not until 20th June that Lord Keith, having settled the details of the fleet, provided for the embarkation of the troops returning from the Mediterranean, and made the necessary preparations for retiring from our conquests, was able to set sail for England, leaving Sir Richard Bickerton as senior officer behind him at Gibraltar. The Foudroyant arrived at St Helens on 2d July, and Lord Keith went home to his house in Harley Street as soon as the vessel anchored at Spithead. At London he received a gracious welcome from both the Government and the Admiralty, in spite of many warm altercations in which he had been engaged with them during his service in the Mediterranean; and numerous congratulations from private individuals were waiting his arrival. Among others was a letter from the Marquis of Wellesley, then Governor-General of India, whose gratitude Lord Keith had earned by his interest in the Indian expedition to Egypt, which, though it had

not arrived in time to take part in the active operations, had yet been of great value on account of the impression which its presence had made on the French. "I cannot omit this opportunity," wrote Lord Wellesley, "of offering to your lordship my sincere congratulations on the complete success which has attended the British navy and army in the late arduous and important services in the Mediterranean and in Egypt." It might have been thought that a period of repose was due to the Admiral after his hard work; but the affairs of the Mediterranean, and subjects relating to his late command, kept him closely engaged in correspondence with the Admiralty during the remaining months of 1802.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE THREATENED INVASION.

1802–1812.

DURING the autumn of 1802 and the winter of 1802-3, Lord Keith remained in London, at his house in Harley Street, resting from the fatigues of the Egyptian expedition and recruiting his strength, which had suffered considerably during the anxious months off Alexandria. He did not take an active part in politics, but appears to have been consulted frequently by the Government regarding the evacuation of the Mediterranean conquests, which was already becoming a vexed question between the British and French Governments. Lord Keith, although he had loyally obeyed his orders to prepare for a withdrawal of the British forces, had a strong presentiment that the stipulations could not be safely carried out; and that, if our troops were taken away, we could not allow Egypt and Malta again to fall under French domination. Events were in train to convert Ministers to the same view; and

though no employment was immediately provided for Lord Keith on his arrival, he had full reason to believe that the Admiralty would be glad to utilise his services at no distant date. Meanwhile he devoted himself to the consideration of some important professional questions, among which were the difficulties that the King's ships encountered at the anchorage in Leith Roads, and the alternative advantages presented by Longannet, farther up the Firth of Forth, as a naval station. In the selection of South Queensferry as the anchorage for ships of war in the Forth, the Admiralty have in the main given effect to his recommendations.

In February 1803 the stormy interview between Buonaparte and Lord Whitworth, the British ambassador, regarding the evacuation of the Mediterranean, betokened a coming rupture of the peace. On 11th of the next month the Admiral found himself appointed to the command at Plymouth, and on 17th he hoisted his flag again on the Culloden, with which Troubridge's name has been so closely connected. He had to fit out a fleet for himself, for advantage had been taken of the peace to make a precipitate reduction of the naval establishments. While he was thus busied, news reached him on 12th May of the definite breach of our relations with France; and at the same time he received his commission as Commander-in-Chief in the North Sea, along with an injunction from the Admiralty to lose

no time in proceeding to the Nore. So rapid were Lord Keith's movements, that he hoisted his flag on board the Zealand off Sheerness on 18th May, only two days after war with France had been formally declared.

As Commander in the North Sea, Lord Keith practically divided with Admiral Cornwallis, Commander of the Channel fleet, the duty of protecting England from invasion. The threats which Buonaparte had thrown out of a French descent upon Britain, backed up by the naval preparations that were ostentatiously going on from Brest to the Texel, were a menace that stirred the heart of the country to its core. Lord Keith took up his command deeply impressed with the serious responsibilities that devolved upon himself personally; for the North Sea fleet, with the exception of a small number of vessels cruising in the Downs and off the coast of Holland, had to be created, and the available ships preparing in the Thames were far too few to raise the fleet to a strength sufficient for the duties it would have to perform. The navy was now feeling the effects of Lord St Vincent's retrenchments; and the Admiral's first duty was to fit out a number of ships, and procure crews.

His instructions were to intercept all vessels belonging to the French and Batavian Republics; to arrange for the protection of the North Sea trade and fisheries; and, in conjunction with the military

authorities, to provide for the coast defences, especially for the safety of the Thames and Medway. He had under him Rear-Admiral Thornborough and Commodore Sir Sidney Smith, who were then watching the naval preparations going on in the Dutch ports; and to these was shortly after added Rear-Admiral Montague, who took up his station at the Downs.

The panic in the North Sea rose to a height on the declaration of war. Vessels would not sail from Yarmouth to the Tyne without a convoy. The trade to the Baltic and the north of Europe made constant demands upon the Admiral's attention. The Admiralty kept him unceasingly occupied in advising upon the defences, and in reporting the progress of his preparations; and he was detained at the Nore, when he would have preferred to move about and satisfy himself as to the condition of his command. The numerous crews which he had to raise were mainly obtained by pressing; and when mistakes were made, as frequently happened, investigation and correspondence were added to duties that already were enough to overwhelm a commanding officer. Whatever advantages the impress system may possess in a time of national peril, the trouble which it occasioned to the naval authorities, if we may judge from Lord Keith's letters, must have made it acceptable only as a last resource. However, men were energetically collected, and each

ship of war completely manned as soon as it could be got ready for sea.

Rear-Admiral Rowley was despatched to the Nore to Lord Keith's assistance, and on 28th May three of the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House were sent down by the Admiralty, at his lordship's request, to consult with him regarding the defence of the river. The Admiral had by this time shifted his flag to the Vlieter, and plans were arranged for placing block-ships and gunboats in the Thames. By 7th June he had planned a system of defence for the river, and was able to report to the Admiralty in the following terms: "Their lordships will naturally conclude that I have not had sufficient opportunities of being so well acquainted with the points therein [in the chart of the defence] determined on, as to be able to affirm that those ships and vessels will safely ride at anchor during the summer and winter months respectively, at the first and second positions which it is intended they should occupy; but it is my duty to inform them that the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House, with whom I consulted upon the subject, seemed to entertain no doubt of their being able to do so.

"A considerable number of small gunboats or barges will, in case of necessity, be extremely useful, and should be kept in constant readiness; but in bad weather these could not possibly ride among the banks. They ought therefore to lie at Harwich, in

the Swale, Colne river, Sheerness, and other places which may be recommended for convenience and security. The great difficulty with respect to them will be bringing them out promptly to act when occasion shall require. Perhaps their lordships may approve of their crews, except the officers and two trusty hands, being kept in the block-ships on the stations to which they may be attached, and of arrangements being made for the boats being carried to them at the shortest notice, by some people of the description of the Sea Fencibles, under the direction and superintendence of intelligent officers, when occasion should require. It would appear necessary that a complete system of land communication, by signal-posts or telegraph, should be established along the coast. Due attention will be paid by me to an arrangement by signal in Horsley Bay, Goldermire's Gate, the King's Channel, and the Wallet, whence the signals (which should be some of the same that are used on shore) might be communicated by land till they reach Sheerness. . . . I am of opinion that the possibility of the ships and vessels stationed in one or more of the channels being attacked by a superior force, should be held in view; and that in such case, as well as in case of its being discovered that the enemy in a great number of small vessels were passing over the sands, out of reach of their fire, that both block-ships and gun-vessels should retire as expeditiously as possible to the Warp, and

form a line of defence under the direction of the flag-officer commanding at Sheerness, who should hold himself in preparation for such an emergency—from the Nore Light to Shoeburyness, or towards the Blacktail Beacon—a position which I apprehend it would be nearly impossible to force. It would appear advisable that the block-ships should be particularly well provided with fire-booms, and keep boats in readiness with grapnels to tow off fire-vessels, should the enemy make use of such means to force them from their stations, on the approach of any embarkation of their troops.

"Such is the general system I presume to recommend; but, greatly distrusting my own capacity for such arrangements, and fully confiding on the discernment, judgment, and ability of their lordships, and on the various and superior sources of information to which they can refer, I shall thankfully receive and punctually attend to the execution of any alterations they may be pleased to direct."

Lord Keith's experience and fertility in devising expedients of defence, soon made an appreciable change on the unprotected condition in which he found the eastern coast. He had a distinct policy in his mind, that if the French were to make a descent upon any part of the English shores, the merchant craft and small boats must be utilised to harass them, and if possible prevent a landing. He made minute inquiries as to the number of seamen who

could be made available as volunteers in the ports of Kent and Essex, and on 6th July he submitted a detailed scheme to the Admiralty for securing the services of 4500 men in armed row-boats, to be employed in event of the enemy succeeding in breaking through his own fleet: "As it is certainly possible that, from the contiguity of the opposite coast, the enemy may reach our shores in a calm, while our ships and sailing vessels would be incapable of moving, and be obliged reluctantly to remain inactive spectators of its uninterrupted approach, a competent provision would seem proper for guarding against an event so much to be deprecated, and the best means would appear to be by resisting the enemy's attack with weapons like their own."

Keith accordingly recommended that 125 gun, mortar, or howitzer boats should be equipped, each under the charge of a lieutenant, with one or two seamen practised in gunnery, and stationed at Margate, Ramsgate, Dover, Folkestone, and Pevensey, as the most central points for resisting attacks. A third of these boats was to be assigned to the defence of the Essex and Suffolk coast, and the remainder for that of Kent and Sussex. The Admiral considered that Oxford Ness and Beachy Head were the limits within which a descent from the French coast, in rowing boats, would be possible. He anticipated that volunteers in sufficient numbers would be found for this service; but if need be, these could be sup-

plemented from the Government dockyards, the Ordnance and Custom-house establishments, and from the dock servants of the East India Company, who alone would form 1000 men. "The boats," urges Lord Keith, "being all numbered or named, great care should be taken that every man should be made distinctly acquainted with the name or number of his boat, and the port of her resort; and in the appointment of the crews, it would be proper to consult as much as possible the convenience of individuals. When any appearance of an invasion, by means of such embarkation as those people would be called upon to resist, should be manifested, they should be despatched with the utmost expedition to join the boats to which they respectively belong, under the superintendence of a competent officer at each port, who should be authorised to arrange the boats, embark their crews, and conduct them to the general point of rendezvous. It may possibly be objected to this mode of manning these boats, that the proposed measure would be defeated by the delay incurred in drawing men from so great a distance; but it is to be remembered that more time must be occupied by the enemy in embarking any force from which serious consequences could result, than would be sufficient to call for these crews by signal from London, and admit of their coming down."

The Admiralty was much struck by these sugges-

tions, and gave orders that they should be acted upon; while at the same time it was maturing a more doubtful scheme of Sea Fencible corps, which would fit into the Admiral's plans. Lord Keith had also the main burden of the arrangement of the coast signals and telegraphs, which under his supervision were brought to great perfection, so that if the French had landed, whether by day or night, a few hours would have sufficed to have raised all the eastern and south-eastern counties in arms. The Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York, had begged the Admiral to keep himself in constant communication with the commandants of the garrisons on both sides of the Thames, and his advice was repeatedly asked by the Horse Guards in the arrangements of their military dispositions on the coast. In fact, Lord Keith's correspondence during the months from May to December 1803, upon matters connected with the defence of the country, would fill three or four goodly-sized volumes; and yet he managed to discharge all the pressing duties that properly pertained to his command, even down to the minutest details of discipline, the grievances of seamen, and the differences of his captains with dockyard commissioners.

If we remember that Lord Keith, when he went to the Nore on 18th May, had practically to provide a fleet for himself, with the exception of the few vessels employed in observing the coasts of

France and Holland, some idea of his activity may be formed, from the dispositions which he was able to report having made to the Admiralty on 1st July :—

"Be pleased to inform their lordships that till I receive particular instructions from them, it is my intention to make the following general distribution of the ships and vessels under my command: The block-ships and gun-vessels will occupy the stations assigned to them on the sketch of the entrances of the river, transmitted for their lordships' information in my letter to you of the 7th ultimo; but as I apprehend it will not be their lordships' intention that the latter should remain stationary until circumstances render it indispensable, they will be employed for the protection of our own trade, and the annoyance of the enemy's, on the stations hereafter mentioned; and as those stations will not be remote from the posts which they are to occupy in the system of defence, there can be little doubt of my being able to recall them, should any serious occasion require.

"I mean to employ under the orders of Rear-Admiral Montague, directing them to rendezvous generally in the Downs—

The Utrecht, . . . Flag-ship.

Raisonable, . . .	For the service of Helvoet, Flushing, and other ports of the Dutch coast in that vicinity.
Amelia, . . .	
Africaine, . . .	
Harpy, . . .	
Locust, Minx, Jackal, Gun-vessels,	
1 Cutter, . . .	

Immortalité, . .	Off Calais, and thence to Cherburg on the French coast, and for the protection of the trade on the English coast as far as Beachy Head.
Leda, ...	
Lark, ...	
Ranger, . . .	
Jalouse, . . .	
Archer, . . .	
Conflict, . . .	
3 Cutters, . . .	

Lynx, ...	Off Dunkirk.
Basilisk, . . .	
Millbrook, . . .	

Under the direction of Commodore Sir Sidney Smith, to rendezvous off Horsley Bay—

Antelope, . . .	For the protection of the trade at the entrance of the Thames, and off Oxford Ness, stretching occasionally over towards the opposite coast when circumstances may require.
Monkey, Escort, Adder, Charger, Aggressor, Vixen, Mariner, Gun-vessels,	
Cutters, when they can be spared, . .	

Under the orders of Rear-Admiral Thornborough, to rendezvous in Yarmouth Roads, except the Amethyst

and Clyde, whose rendezvous I propose to be in Leith Roads—

Gelykheid, . . .		Flag-ship.
Melpomene, . . .		From Yarmouth to Oxford Ness and opposite coast off Holland.
Penelope, . . .		
Fortunée, . . .		From Yarmouth to the Humber, and opposite coast.
Clyde, ...		From Flamborough Head to the Firth of Forth, and opposite coast.
Amethyst, . . .		
Snipe,		
Mallard,		
Constant,	Gun-vessels,	For protecting the trade from Oxford Ness to the Spurn, and cruising according to the Rear-Admiral's directions on the coast of Holland.
Bold,		
Zwieter,		
Censor,		
2 Cutters, . . .		

"I intend to employ four of the bomb-vessels under Rear-Admiral Montague in the Downs, and the other three under Rear-Admiral Thornborough at Yarmouth, for protecting convoys and driving privateers off the coast, and as none of these will be ever distant, their services can always be speedily commanded should they be required.

"The ships of the line intended for the service of the North Sea will rendezvous at Yarmouth or in the Downs, as their lordships may think best, and can be kept constantly employed in cruising in the Channel or in the North Sea, or be in readiness for

opposing any force of importance with which we may be threatened by the enemy.

"The frigates and sloops now employed with convoys and on distant service will always be required for duties of a similar kind, and no doubt occasions will arise that may demand partial changes in any of these arrangements; but the foregoing appears to me to be the best calculated for fulfilling the duties of the command as far as the means will go. When the force is increased, it will be important to extend more effectual protection to the northern coast. On that service I have heard that some useful gun-vessels were employed during the last war.

"In the event of any immediate prospect of invasion, a force proportioned to the occasion could be assembled at any point where it might be required, and all the gun-vessels could speedily be ordered to repair to their posts.—I have the honour to be, &c.,

"KEITH."

The wishes of the Admiralty kept Lord Keith close to the Thames during the whole of the remainder of the year 1803; but there was little going on on the opposite coasts to call for his presence, compared with the necessity that existed for vigorous defensive measures on the English shores. With the few ships that were available, a stringent blockade of the coasts of France and Holland bordering on the North Sea was maintained, and the extensive naval

preparations which the First Consul had ordered were held in efficient check. Several chases, accompanied by petty engagements, took place during the autumn; and numerous captures of vessels under the enemy's flag, or which were intended to aid the French demonstration, were made. Boulogne was naturally a chief centre of interest, and though craft of light draught could not always be prevented from standing in close to the coast, Buonaparte's hopes of the invasion flotilla being swelled from other ports were greatly damped by the close surveillance which the North Sea fleet managed to keep up. Lord Keith himself made repeated visits to the squadron in the Channel during the autumn; but the wish of the Admiralty that he should keep in port, in order that he might be in close communication with their lordships, compelled him to leave the maintenance of the blockade to the admirals serving under him.

Early in the month of October the Admiral made a personal survey of the ports from Calais to Boulogne, and at considerable risk inspected the preparations about the latter harbour. The Admiralty was anxious that an attempt should be made to bombard Boulogne; but Lord Keith came to the conclusion that the probable effect of a bombardment would not compensate for the positive loss of men and damage to ships that would have to be incurred. "In case, however," he writes, "their lordships shall be pleased to order any attack to be made on Bou-

logne, two modes naturally suggest themselves: one with ships at anchor, and the other when under way. If the former mode be chosen, the force must be considerable, and line-of-battle ships must be placed opposite to the various batteries to the N.E. and S.W. of the harbour, and also against the pier-heads, to draw off the enemy's attention from the bomb-vessels, which would otherwise be destroyed; and the wind must either be from the shore or along it, for if any accident should happen, there is not room to cast inshore, as it shallows suddenly from fathoms to feet. If the latter mode should be directed, when at any time so great a number of boats may be assembled within the piers as to oblige them to lie in clusters and near the harbour's mouth, shells may be thrown into the pier by bomb-vessels under sail; or if they should be placed thick without the piers, shot or shells might reach them from ships passing under sail,—but I think that the effect must be very uncertain." The Admiralty concurred in these views, and Boulogne was left unmolested, excepting when a tempting opportunity was offered to the British vessels watching the port of throwing shells into the harbour, which seldom succeeded in doing much damage.

During the autumn, the Admiral, at the request of the Duke of York, drew up a long report upon the threatened invasion, which places the condition of the country and the risks to which it was exposed

in a clearer light than probably any other State paper of the day. The facts before the Admiral at the time led him to hazard a conjecture that a fleet might endeavour to run from Brest and make for the North Sea, cover a disembarkation of troops on some convenient shore, then run off the Dutch ports, and thence protect an embarkation of troops to Scotland. Whether such a scheme may have entered into Buonaparte's plans or not, it was obviated by the additional precautions which the Admiralty took to prevent its being carried out; and soon after Vice-Admiral Bligh was sent down to take command in Scotland, with special instructions to superintend the naval defensive preparations. Lord Keith was warmly thanked by his Royal Highness for the value and extent of the information contained in his report, which did much to rescue the authorities from the vague and often confused ideas that had hitherto prevailed regarding the situation.

As the long dark nights of winter approached, the danger of a sudden descent upon the English coast became more real. Elaborate plans of defence were drawn up by the Admiralty and submitted to Lord Keith, who made them the subject of a long and minute report, freely criticising their lordships' suggestions. As if his responsibilities had not before been sufficiently onerous, it was now proposed to extend the North Sea command beyond its usual limits, and place the whole coast under his charge as

far as Selsea Bill, and to intrust him with the task of guarding the French shores down to Cape Harfleur. Active squadrons were to be employed off the French ports during the winter, and additional defensive posts erected on the English coast, in case of an expedition eluding our ships. But the North Sea fleet was far too small for all the work that it was expected to compass, and Lord Keith pressed hard for an additional supply of vessels. The Admiralty, however, felt itself unable to assist him to the required extent, and the duty told severely upon all concerned, from the Admiral downwards. The services of the fleet had to be economised as much as possible; and the work that the Admiral managed to achieve with so small a force, brought him compliments both from the Admiralty and his brother officers. His dispositions at this time kept three main objects in view—to maintain a narrow watch on the French, to make such a show of defensive force as would keep the population on our coasts in good heart, and to provide by convoys against British commerce on the German Ocean suffering detriment from delay or danger.

The winter of 1803-4 passed without any necessity for putting the ample precautions that had been taken to the test. The Admiral kept close to the coasts of Kent and Essex, and maintained an almost daily communication with the Admiralty, being besides very frequently called up to town for closer

consultation. The strict blockade had completely stopped the western commerce of France, while Buonaparte had the mortification of seeing the merchantment of Britain pursuing their way almost as safely as if there had been a general peace. Threats of action on the part of the enemy were in consequence redoubled, and the dimensions which the invasion flotilla now assumed rendered a speedy descent upon the British coast a much more immediate probability than it had been during the previous year. Lord Keith, however, continued to write in very hopeful language to the Government; and he had little doubt but that, though the French passed his fleet and effected a landing, they would speedily be destroyed. His chief vexation was, that he had no power to disturb the preparations at Boulogne and the other French ports; and he was intensely annoyed when the superior adroitness of the French enabled them to take advantage of his small fleet and reinforce the flotilla at Boulogne, as several times happened during the winter of 1803-4. What the Admiral prayed for was a fleet sufficient to destroy this new Armada that was threatening our coasts; and though the Admiralty could give no encouragement to his expectations, his papers testify to the long and continuous thought which he bestowed upon means of ruining the French flotilla.

Among the actions which occurred within the limits of Lord Keith's command during the spring

and summer of 1804, one or two of the more important may be mentioned. On 20th February, Lieutenant Williams, of the naval cutter Active No. II., fell in with sixteen sail of the enemy's small craft proceeding from Ostend to Boulogne. In spite of the superiority of their numbers, Williams attacked the Frenchmen, cut out one of the squadron, and made the others take to flight — "under circumstances," says Lord Keith, "highly creditable to himself and the cutter's crew," who only numbered thirty men. From the captain of the captured vessel Lord Keith received important information regarding the preparations in Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as a statement that the invasion was to take place the following month (March). The more attention was paid to this report, as on the previous day the Admiralty had warned Lord Keith to hold himself prepared for a French descent at any time. Another gallant and spirited attack was made by Captains Hardinge and Pelly of Admiral Thornborough's squadron, on 31st March, on the Dutch national brig Atalante, at anchor within the Vlie roads. These two officers, with the boats of the Scorpion and Beaver, boarded the brig by night and carried her off from under the range of the enemy's guns. "Although the brilliancy of this service," writes Lord Keith to the Admiralty, "can receive no additional lustre from any commendation that it is in my power to bestow, I obey the dictates

of both duty and inclination in recommending the distinguished services of Captains Hardinge and Pelly, and of the officers and men employed under them on this occasion, to the consideration of their lordships, who will not fail to observe the delicacy with which Captain Hardinge refrains in his narrative from any mention whatever of himself, nor to recollect that Captain Pelly was promoted to the rank of a commander in consequence of his being most severely wounded in the performance of his duty before Boulogne."

All the operations in Lord Keith's fleet this summer did not, however, meet with the same gratifying success. The worst disaster was the loss of the Vincejo, 18-gun brig-sloop, Captain Wright, which was surrounded and captured by a flotilla of the enemy off the coast of France, after a brave defence lasting over two hours. Captain Wright complained that the Vincejo was "as ill-manned a ship as ever sailed from England;" and blame was attached by his friends to the Admiral, who, however, had the sufficient excuse that he had done the best that could be done with insufficient means, and that it was to the bravery of the seamen rather than to the appointments of the fleet that the safety of the country had been committed.

In the month of May the Addington Ministry resigned. Mr Pitt returned to office, and Lord Melville once more became the head of the Admi-

ralty. Among the first acts of the new Ministry was to call upon Lord Keith for a statement regarding the sufficiency of the force under his command for the defence of the east coast. The Admiral in reply pointed out how great were the difficulties which so small a force had to contend with in discharging all the duties which the Admiralty expected to be performed; and he asked for additional vessels to be stationed at Havre and off the Elbe and Weser; and also for ships to cruise off the coast of Norway and Flamborough Head, to protect the North Sea commerce against privateering. Lord Melville threw all his energies into the work of defence, and close communication upon all proposals submitted to the Admiralty was maintained between him and Keith. The Addington Ministry had been nervously anxious that attempts should be made upon Boulogne and the other ports where the flotilla was preparing; but Lord Melville readily entered into the Admiral's views, that the first necessity was to secure our own shores, and to allow France to exhaust her resources in preparations which he had little doubt Britain would be able to render ineffective. Lord Keith, however, sent his assistant-captain, John Stewart, who had done such gallant and humane service when the Queen Charlotte was on fire, to survey the defences of Ostend, off which some of the vessels under Sir Sidney Smith had lately been very successful in annoying the enemy; but the attention of the Gov-

ernment soon became more closely directed to plans for acting against the vessels assembled at Boulogne, from which the danger of invasion was most imminent. The possibility of destroying the flotillas by means of fire-ships had frequently been considered by the Admiralty during the summer. In the spring Lord Keith had transmitted plans of a fire-ship, proposed by Captain Patton, from Portsmouth to the Board, and had offered some general remarks on the feasibility of such operations. This was a species of warfare of which the Admiral had probably more experience than any other officer in the service. Both at Charlestown and at Toulon he had fitted vessels with tightly bunged casks, full of combustibles, which had proved very effective; and he had proposed to destroy Parker's mutineers by fire-vessels if they should endeavour to force their way up the Thames. Accordingly, when in the month of September Lord Keith was consulted regarding an assault by means of fire-ships, and the plans of a new description of vessel were shown to him, he was disposed to regard the project with favour. The scheme which the Admiralty resolved to adopt was, however, more elaborate and less explosive than the simpler contrivance which the Admiral would have been inclined to prefer; and he had already begun to provide fire-ships for himself, when the Navy Board requested him to desist, as they wished to make trial of the plans which had

been put forward by Mr Fulton, an American. The proposed fire-machine is thus described by Mr James in his 'Naval History'[1]:—

"It consisted of a coffer of about 21 feet long and 3¼ broad, resembling in appearance a log of mahogany, except that its extremities were formed like a wedge. Its covering was of thick plank, lined with lead, caulked and tarred. Outside this was a coat of canvas, paid over with hot pitch. The vessel weighed when filled (done, of course, before the covering was wholly put on) about two tons. The contents consisted, besides the apparatus, of as much ballast as would just keep the upper surface of the deck of the coffer even with the water's edge. Amidst a quantity of powder (about 40 barrels) and other inflammable matter was a piece of clock-work, the mainspring of which, on the withdrawing of a peg placed on the outside, would in a given time (from six to ten minutes) draw the trigger of a lock and explode the vessel. This 'catamaran,' as it was called, had no mast, and was to be towed to the spot of its operation. On the opposite end to which the tow-rope was fixed was a line with a sort of grappling-iron at its extremity, kept afloat by pieces of cork, and intended to hook itself to the cable of the object of destruction and swing the coffer alongside."

Lord Keith agreed that the "catamaran" scheme should have a fair trial whenever a suitable occasion presented itself. He had his doubts about

[1] Vol. iii. pp. 231, 232.

the machines, and would have preferred attacking the fleet with the older-fashioned and ruder fire-ships, which, although they exposed the party directing them to greater risks, were more likely in the end to prove certain means of destruction. Towards the end of September a considerable number of the flotilla ventured outside Boulogne harbour, and anchored in a double line without the pier, to the number of 150 or 160 vessels. Lord Keith, who was then at Ramsgate in the Monarch, thought the opportunity a favourable one for trying the effect of the fire-ships. We shall give his own account of the expedition, as contained in his despatch to the Admiralty:—

"MONARCH, OFF BOULOGNE,
3d October 1804.

"SIR,—Their lordships are aware that my attention has for some time past been directed to the object of ascertaining the most effectual mode of annoying the enemy's flotillas at their anchorages in front of their ports under protection of their land-batteries. Having on the afternoon of the 1st instant arrived at the anchorage, and finding the weather promising, and about 150 of the enemy's flotilla on the outside of the pier, I resolved to make an experiment on a limited scale of the means of attack which had been provided.

"The final arrangements for this purpose were

made on the morning of yesterday. The officers named on the other side were put in charge of the principal vessels which at this time were to be employed. The armed launches and other boats of the squadron were appointed to accompany and protect them. The Castor, Greyhound, and some smaller vessels, were directed to take up an advanced and convenient anchorage for covering their retreat, giving protection to men who might be wounded and boats that might be repelled, and for towing off the boats in general in the event of the wind freshening and blowing upon the coast. The operation commenced a quarter past nine o'clock last evening, and terminated a quarter past four this morning, during which time several vessels, prepared for the purpose, were exploded amongst or very close to the flotilla; but on account of the very great distance at which they lay from each other, no very extensive injury seems to have been sustained, although it is evident that there has been very considerable confusion among them, and that two of the brigs and several of the small vessels appear to be missing since yesterday. I have great satisfaction in reporting that, notwithstanding a very heavy discharge of shell, shot, and musketry was kept up by the enemy throughout the night, no casualty on our part has been sustained. The enemy made no attempt to oppose their rowing-boats to ours. Their lordships will not expect that at the present moment I am to enter much into

details; but I think it my duty to state to them my conviction, that in the event of any great accumulation of the enemy's force in their roadsteads, an extensive and combined operation of a similar nature will hold forth a reasonable prospect of a successful result.

"The conduct of the officers and men who have been employed on this occasion deserves my highest commendations. I cannot more forcibly impress their merits upon their lordships' attention than by remarking that the service was undertaken not only in face of, but immediately under, the whole line of the enemy's land-batteries, and their field-artillery and musketry upon the coast, but also under that of upwards of 150 armed vessels ranged round the under side of the bay; and that the officers and men who could so deliberately and resolutely advance into the midst of the flotilla under such circumstances, must be considered worthy of being intrusted with the performance of any service, however difficult or dangerous it may appear to be, and consequently highly deserving of the honour of their lordships' protection.—I have the honour, &c., KEITH."

The damage done to the flotilla was little or nothing. The French line opened and let the fireships through as they approached; and with the exception of the two brigs and smaller vessels missed by Lord Keith next morning, which may or may not

have been destroyed, the French vessels sustained no injury. Lord Keith had simply undertaken the expedition as an experiment, and as an experiment it had been fairly successful, showing that under favourable circumstances the scheme might be worked with good effect. The Opposition, however, magnified the attempt into a general attack upon the flotilla, and affected to bewail the humiliation with which the failure had covered the British navy. The principle of using fire-ships was also condemned as un-English by those who had forgotten that that most English of sovereigns, Queen Elizabeth, had herself suggested that fire-ships should be employed to discomfit the Armada—a recommendation which was carried out with great disadvantage to the Spaniards. A second attempt was made by Sir Home Popham, under Lord Keith's instructions, against Fort Rouge, in the month of December; but the "catamarans" would not work, and the Admiralty resolved to drop them. Party warfare has magnified the catamaran expeditions into a serious attempt to destroy the flotilla; but Lord Keith never considered it as more than a trial of the machines, and indeed all along he had placed more confidence in the old-fashioned fire-ships. The result of the experiment on the French was, however, satisfactory. They became more careful in exposing themselves out of port, and our cruisers were less harassed by watching during the months of the following winter and

spring; while the enemy was compelled to erect a boom to barricade the gunboats at Boulogne against any similar attack.

As the development of the newly made Emperor's ambitious policy drew away the danger from the French seaboard towards the interior of Europe, and the interest of the country became transferred from the North Sea to the coast of Spain and the Mediterranean, the pressure of Lord Keith's duties was to some extent relaxed. He was now less tied down to work on board his flag-ship, and was able more frequently to spend a portion of his time in London. This was more especially the case after the battle of Trafalgar had restored Britain to her position as unquestioned mistress of the seas. During the eventful years from 1805 to 1808, while Napoleon was carrying everything before him in Austria and Germany, there is nothing of importance to note in Lord Keith's naval life. On 9th November 1805, his lordship was promoted from the rank of Admiral of the Blue to Admiral of the White.

In the spring of 1807 the Admiralty felt that our position in the North Sea was so comparatively secure that it could safely revert to the establishment that had existed before invasion was threatened, and Lord Keith was relieved of his command on 22d May 1807. The Admiralty, in announcing this resolution, wrote a very handsome letter of thanks to Lord Keith for his services, and freely

acknowledged the extent to which the security of the country had been owing to his exertions during the crisis in the years 1803-4.

The comparative freedom to enjoy society, of which his busy life had left him so few opportunities, was very grateful to Lord Keith; and he gladly availed himself of the advantage which offered for paying flying visits to town, where his genial character and conversational powers secured him a warm welcome in the highest circles.

On 12th December 1808, Lord Keith married Miss Hester Maria Thrale of Streatham and Crowmarsh Battle, Oxfordshire, whom readers of Boswell know so well as Dr Johnson's "Queenie." Mrs Thrale thus writes of her daughter's marriage: "Admiral Lord Keith is the man. A *good* man, for aught I hear; a *rich* man, for aught I am told; a *brave* man, we have always heard; and a *wise* man, I trow, by his choice. The name no new one, and excellent for a character—*e.g.*:—

> "A Faery my first, who to fame makes pretence;
> My second a Rock, dear Britannia's defence;
> In my third, when combined, will too quickly be shown
> The Faery and Rock in our brave Elphinstone."

Lady Keith's experiences of life had fitted her with an excellent training for the duties on which she was now to enter. Under very difficult circumstances she had already exhibited remarkable judgment, firmness, and energy. She was a fair

proficient in the lighter accomplishments of music and painting; but she had been partly educated by Dr Johnson, and she had applied herself to strengthen her mental faculties by the severe studies of perspective, fortification, Hebrew, and mathematics. It was thus in her retirement that this lady laid the foundation of a character, than which during the long and prosperous years of her after-life, few have ever exercised more beneficent influence, or inspired more genuine esteem.

Lord Keith, like most of the other naval peers, abstained from taking any share in the trial of Lord Melville; and indeed he did not show much active interest in the debates of the House of Lords, though he appears to have frequently attended them while in town. His time, when not occupied in the duties of his command, was given to his family and to society; but even when he was enjoying a holiday in town, his time was much taken up by summonses from the Admiralty, where he appears to have been much consulted about naval affairs. On 31st July 1810, Lord Keith received another step in the service by being raised to the rank of Admiral of the Red; and on the 24th February 1812, he was again transferred to a scene of more active operations and increased responsibility, by being appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Channel fleet, in succession to Admiral Sir Charles Cotton.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SURRENDER OF BUONAPARTE.

1812–1815.

When Lord Keith took over the command of the Channel fleet in the spring of 1812, the Admiralty did not intend that he himself should actively participate in the operations that were taking place on the coast of France. Though still full of vigour, in spite of all the hard and wearing service he had gone through—he was then sixty-six years of age—he was of more service at Portsmouth or Plymouth, within easy reach of the Admiralty, than he would have been with the blockading squadrons which, under able lieutenants, were cruising off the coast of France. He had no longer the same chances of personal distinction as those which he had turned to so good account when holding detached commands, but he was not the man to grudge his juniors the chance of making their way in the service. He applied himself with all his usual industry to the duties of his new command. During the months of July,

August, and September, he visited his fleet and drew up long and minute instructions for the guidance of his captains under such circumstances as the varying fortunes of the war on the Continent seemed likely to bring about. He was not, however, so closely tied to his post but that he was able to pay frequent visits to his house in Harley Street, or to his pleasant place of Purbrook Park in Hampshire, which afforded the advantage of being able easily to communicate with the fleet whenever anything of importance occurred.

While Lord Keith was making his dispositions in the Channel, the Emperor Napoleon was encountering the reverses of his fatal Russian campaign, which was soon to prove the turning-point in his career of ambition, and to pave the way for the overthrow of his empire. The Russian expedition drew away danger from our seas, and lessened the pressure that had been put upon our fleet when the theatre of war had been nearer the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts. Spain and Portugal were then the countries to which the interest of Great Britain most warmly attached, and Lord Keith, anxious that his fleet should second the operations of Lord Wellington as much as possible, kept the movements of the British forces in the Peninsula strictly in view in his dispositions. In June 1812, Sir Home Popham of the Venerable, with the assistance of Spanish guerillas, forced the garrisons of Sequetio and Castro, and

some other ports on the Spanish coast, to surrender —successes which were of material importance to Lord Wellington, who was anxious to have an open seaboard. Wellington gratefully confessed his obligations to the Channel fleet, and by his desire Sir Howard Douglas wrote thus to Sir Home Popham on 12th August 1812: "I had an opportunity, in a long conference with Lord Wellington, of giving a detailed account of your operations; and am happy to inform you that his lordship is fully satisfied of the use they have been to his movements." An intercepted letter from Caffarelli proves this, by stating, in answer to an order he had received from Marmont, "that a British armament being on the coast, he could not attack a single man; indeed, some troops which he had already sent were recalled on the appearance of our squadron."

In the following year Lord Keith was able to afford material assistance in the reduction of St Sebastian, by sending a squadron under Sir George Collier to co-operate with the siege; but though his lordship, more than any other admiral of his time, understood the significance of military operations, and how best to aid them by sea, he found comparatively few opportunities of affording direct assistance to the British arms in the Peninsula; and had to content himself with maintaining a strict blockade on the enemy's coasts, and with insuring the safety of the numerous transports and convoys

which were constantly passing between Great Britain and the seat of war. The zeal and care with which he superintended this duty met with a warm acknowledgment from Lord Melville, with whom he still remained in close and friendly communication; and on 1st June 1814 he was advanced in the peerage to a viscountcy.

In the spring of 1815 we find him laying the foundation-stone of Southwark Bridge. The bridge was constructed by public subscription; and in the procession, which was a very imposing one, the Admiral was attended by Sir John Jackson, the chairman of the committee of subscribers, and by Mr Rennie, the celebrated engineer.

The brief peace which followed the first abdication of Napoleon released Lord Keith from duty, though he had his misgivings about its continuance while Napoleon was allowed to remain so close to France as in the island of Elba. His experiences in the Mediterranean had given him very decided views as to the position which Great Britain ought to take up in that sea; and it was with great dissatisfaction that he had seen our conquests there restored to France after the peace of Amiens. He now considered that Napoleon would prove a source of new danger to Britain in the Mediterranean, and that the island sovereignty would not long satisfy his ambition. He deprecated reductions in the naval establishments until Europe had greater guarantees for

peace than the mere withdrawal of the prime disturber from the scene seemed to afford. He was not then surprised when, on Napoleon's escape from Elba and re-entry into Paris, a hurried summons from the Admiralty required him to resume his old command. Hastily quitting Purbrook Park, he hoisted his flag on the Tonnant, and anxiously awaited in the Channel the result of the great struggle which was to decide the fate of Europe. Two months of constant expectation, during which there was a complete lull in naval operations in the Channel fleet, followed. The Admiral redoubled the exertions of his cruisers and blockading vessels, so that although they were fewer in number than they had been when he was last in command, the French Channel ports were completely shut up. Before the news of the victory of Waterloo, and of the flight of Napoleon to Paris, rendered it necessary to prevent the possibility of the Emperor's escape by sea, Lord Keith's preparations had been effected. When the Admiralty despatch came warning him that Napoleon might try to take shipping in a Channel port, his dispositions were already made, and he had only to pass on the news to his officers stationed on the French coast.

Repulsed by the Chambers and by the populace of Paris, Napoleon, after he had signed his abdication in favour of his son, the young King of Rome, quitted the capital on 25th June for Malmaison. He had demanded, before his departure, two frigates from the Provisional Government to bear him with his suite

and property to America. The Government, however, anxious not to compromise itself with the approaching conquerors, declined his request; and the Powers had already decided that so dangerous an enemy to the peace of Europe was not to go at large. While the Emperor was at Malmaison, Lord Melville had already written a private despatch to Lord Keith, dated 27th June, informing him of Buonaparte's intention of escaping to America, and that it was probable, from the aspect of affairs in France, that he would endeavour to speedily carry out this resolution. Should, Lord Melville said, Buonaparte embark in a small vessel from one of the numerous ports along the coast of France, it might scarcely be possible to prevent his escape; but should he wait until a frigate or sloop of war were fitted out for him, Lord Keith might learn of his preparations, and be enabled to intercept him. At all events, it was the earnest desire of the Government that his lordship should endeavour to capture and detain him, should Buonaparte attempt to quit France within the limits of Lord Keith's command.

After staying four days at Malmaison, Buonaparte set out for Rochefort, with a great train of all the valuables that he could collect together. His bearing on the route, however, showed that he by no means realised how hopeless was his position, but that he still clung to an idea that he was indispensable to the French nation. He continued to keep up his correspondence with all his partisans, and had fre-

quent communication with the army in Paris during his journey to Rochefort. Meantime, however, the Powers were already assuming his capture as certain, and were debating how he was to be disposed of. At the outset, the proposal most in favour was that he should be sent to Fort George in the north of Scotland, and retained there under the guardianship of commissioners of the allied Powers; but this arrangement entailed serious responsibilities which the British Government had good reason to shrink from.

On arriving at Rochefort on 3d July, Buonaparte was convinced of the impossibility of passing the English cruisers. Lord Keith had kept himself informed of his movements, and had doubled the ships off that port by the time of Napoleon's arrival. On the 8th, Buonaparte, with his companions, went on board the French frigate the Saale; but contrary winds, and the impossibility of passing the English, detained his departure. The next few days were spent in hesitating discussions as to what could be done. Some proposed that he should secretly escape from the Gironde, where the corvette Bayadère, Captain Baudin, was waiting; but for this contingency also Lord Keith, if they had known it, had made preparations. Others suggested that they should endeavour to run the blockade in the night-time: Captain Ponet of the Méduse, the other frigate in Rochefort roads, volunteered to fight the Bellerophon, while the

Saale slipped past and got out to sea. Some of the more desperate spirits proposed that Napoleon should land on the isle of Aix, and having joined a force of 10,000 men under General Clausel, should march upon Paris, in the hope that the country would rise along with him. In the long and deep solitary meditations in which Napoleon daily buried himself, no gleam of present hope crossed his imagination. His destiny in the shape of the English cruisers lay right in his path, and the French Government with nervous haste was urging him forward to meet it.

On the 15th July, Lord Melville wrote to Lord Keith that Buonaparte was still at Rochefort, and that Lord Castlereagh had informed him that the Provisional Government had placed the Saale and the Méduse at his disposal; that he had already embarked, but was prevented from sailing by the English cruisers. "Lord Castlereagh," added Lord Melville, "was negotiating with the Government of Louis XVIII. for permission to allow the English cruisers to enter Aix roads without molestation from the batteries, in order that an end might be put to the state of suspense occasioned by the position of the Emperor."

The resolutions arrived at between Lord Castlereagh and the French Ministers had before the date of this letter been communicated to Sir Henry Hotham, the senior officer on the French coast, the exigency of the business not admitting of orders

being sent through Lord Keith, the Commander-in-Chief. Mr Croker, the Secretary of the Admiralty, who was then in Paris in attendance on Lord Castlereagh, after informing Sir Henry of the position of affairs in Aix roads, goes on to say: "I understand also, from the French Minister of Marine, that the British squadron in that neighbourhood consists of two or three ships of the line, and two or three frigates; and as in some communications I had with Lord Keith on the subject before I left England, his lordship assured me that his attention had been directed to Rochefort, I cannot doubt that, except under some very extraordinary circumstances, the escape of Buonaparte's squadron, or of any vessel from the Charente, is impossible; but as it is for obvious reasons of very great importance that the question with regard to this person should be brought to a decision as speedily as possible, Lord Castlereagh wishes you to consult confidentially with the officer of his Most Christian Majesty, who is the bearer of this letter, and to afford him your most cordial assistance in all practicable measures he may be disposed to recommend for the capture of Buonaparte.

"The plan which has struck his lordship and the French Minister as being most likely to succeed, and will be suggested to the French officer, is as follows: If it be ascertained that Buonaparte is certainly embarked in Aix roads, it may be concluded that he is, as he thinks, sure of the governor and garrison of the

forts which protect the anchorage; and as these forts are very considerable, I entertain little hope that you could think yourself justified in expecting to reduce them, or capture Buonaparte while lying under their full and active protection: but under the present circumstances of France, it seems reasonably to be doubted whether the governor of Aix, if properly summoned by the King's authority, would venture to fire on the ships of his Majesty's allies in the execution of his Majesty's orders. It is therefore expedient that before you proceed to attack the ships, you should send a flag of truce to the governor of the Isle d'Aix, to say 'that by the King of France's express commands you are about to seize the person of the common enemy; that you have no hostile intentions against the ships or subjects of his Most Christian Majesty, but on the contrary look upon them as allies so long as they do not oppose the King's authority; that you do not mean to capture or injure the French ships, or to interfere with them beyond the mere seizure of Buonaparte's person, except so far as their own opposition may render it necessary.' And as to the governor himself: 'That if after this notice he takes any part with Buonaparte, or permits a shot to be fired at you, you will pursue the most energetic measures in your power, and will hold him responsible in his own person for any mischief that may be done.' And you may add, 'that the French Government has

assured you that the King will consider the death of any British sailor employed in the execution of his commands as a murder, of which the governor of the garrison from which that shot may proceed will be held guilty.' This notice on your part will be accompanied by an order from the King to the same effect; and as soon after they shall have been delivered to the governor as may be possible, it seems expedient that you should commence the attack, as it would be desirable not to give the influence of Buonaparte's remonstrance time to operate on that officer's mind. Your professional skill will be your guide how far, in the uncertainty in which you will be as to the conduct of the governor, you will think it justifiable to pursue your attack. Lord Castlereagh feels that it is of the most urgent importance to seize Buonaparte, but he also feels that the safety of his Majesty's ships ought not to be compromised beyond the ordinary risk of a naval engagement; and he is sincerely desirous of avoiding the effusion of blood, which, however, he is inclined to think may be best effected by bold and decisive measures; and if the ship in which Buonaparte may be should, by an obstinate resistance, drive you to extremities, he feels that you ought not, for the sake of saving her or any one on board her, to take any line of conduct which should increase in any degree your own risk. The consequence of resistance will be chargeable on those who may make it. If, however, you should find it im-

practicable with any prospect of success to attack the ships, or if having attacked them you should not find it expedient to continue the engagement, you will of course continue the blockade with the greatest rigour; and if you should require any increase of force, you may either draw something from the neighbourhood of Brest, or write to Lord Keith by one of your own cruisers. . . .

"If Buonaparte or the governor of the fort, or commander of the squadron for him, should propose to surrender on terms, Lord Castlereagh is of opinion that you should reply that you are not authorised to enter into any engagements of that nature; that your orders are to seize the persons of Buonaparte and his family, and to hold them for the disposal of the allied Powers unconditionally. . . .

"Lord Castlereagh wishes to repeat to you that in all I have written it is still left for your own professional judgment and skill to decide on the propriety of attacking the French squadron, which must in a great measure depend upon its local position, of which his lordship was not precisely informed."

So much for the spirit in which the allies were prepared to deal with the fugitive of Rochefort. From the tone of Croker's letter, there is a strong temptation to presume that neither the Government of Louis XVIII. nor Lord Castlereagh would have much regretted had the French frigates in Aix roads challenged an attack, or had the difficulties which

were perplexing them been solved by the death of Buonaparte on board the Méduse.

But before the resolutions of Lord Castlereagh could reach either Sir Henry Hotham or Lord Keith, Napoleon had already yielded himself to the British. On the 9th, Savary and Las Cases were sent to Captain Maitland on board the Bellerophon with a flag of truce, to notify the abdication of Buonaparte, and his presence in Aix roads, and to inquire whether instructions had been received from the English Government to grant the two French frigates a safe convoy to America. Captain Maitland's reply—which, like the request of Buonaparte's envoys, was put in writing—was that he had received no instructions that the two countries were not still at war; that he had no power to permit any vessels to leave Aix roads without the permission of Sir Henry Hotham, his superior officer (to whom he had forwarded Las Cases's despatch by the Falmouth as an express). Captain Maitland also stated to Sir Henry that Savary and Las Cases in conversation had endeavoured to convince him that the peace of Europe depended upon Buonaparte being allowed to depart quietly; that he could still join the army and make a stand in the centre and south of France; and that if refused, they might make good their passage against the English cruisers.

Captain Maitland's despatch was sent on by an express which reached Lord Keith at Plymouth on

19th July; and in the letter which accompanied it, Sir Henry had announced that as Captain Maitland had not a sufficient force to make sure of the two frigates, he himself was about to start in the Superb to reinforce him.

When the French envoys returned to their master, but little satisfied with the results of their visit to the English captain, the Bellerophon stood in in the direction of Aix roads, so that some alarm was felt lest an immediate attack was meditated. "*Mais non,*" says Montholon; "*les Anglais étaient sûrs que le Empereur était là, ils voulaient se rapprocher de leur proie.*"[1] Captain Ponet of the Méduse again pressed that he might be permitted to engage the Bellerophon by night, while the Saale escaped under cover of the action; but the captain of the Saale declined to engage in an undertaking which his Government might be disposed to regard as an act of rebellion. On the 12th, Napoleon with his baggage landed at Aix, perhaps thinking that such a step might alarm the English, lest he again intended throwing himself upon the consideration of the army, and might lead to permission being granted for his departure. If such was his calculation, he was doomed to disappointment. The Bellerophon advanced almost within shot of the batteries. Captain Maitland was harassed by numerous conflicting

[1] Récits de la Captivité de l'Empereur Napoléon, par M. le Général Montholon, i. 78. Paris, Paulin: 1847.

reports of projects of escape, many of which appeared to have been spread by Buonaparte's own friends to throw the English cruisers off their guard. He had in particular been warned that Buonaparte intended to escape by the Maumusson passage, and he had again spread his small force to all the points by which the Emperor was likely to get out to sea; while the chances of Napoleon getting past as the Bellerophon was engaged with one of the French frigates, appeared to him now to be dangerously imminent. Had the orders that were on their way to Sir Henry Hotham reached him, Captain Maitland would in all probability have taken advantage of the permission implied in them to make an attack; but the difficulty was solved before he learned the views of his Government.

On the 13th Buonaparte received a visit from his brother Joseph, who had provided for himself means of escape from Bordeaux to the United States, of which the latter vainly endeavoured to persuade the Emperor to avail himself. Napoleon declined, as Montholon says, lest he should embarrass his brother's flight; more probably he clung to the property which he had with him, and which he would have had to leave behind him at Aix if he had had to cross from the Charente to the Gironde. Besides, Becker, who had been sent to Rochefort as a special commissioner, had orders from the Provisional Government to prevent Buonaparte from again landing on the main-

land, which he would doubtless have deemed it his duty to enforce. Buonaparte had hopes, moreover, that Captain Baudin might appear off the port, and that he might be able to pass the English in some of the small craft on which his property was already stowed away in anticipation.

Early on the morning of the 14th, Bertrand and General l'Allemand again repaired to the Bellerophon, ostensibly to inquire if Captain Maitland had received any fresh instructions, but really to place before the captain a proposal from Napoleon to embark on board the Bellerophon for the purpose of going to England to throw himself on the generosity of the Prince Regent. Maitland declared himself ready to receive Buonaparte and to convey him to England, but distinctly told the envoys that he had no authority for granting terms of any kind. After their return a hesitating and painful council of the Emperor and his friends was held. A fresh proposal of escape was considered, and articles were even drawn up between Bertrand and Besson, the owner of a merchant brig, as to the terms on which the latter would endeavour to run the blockade with the fugitives. But the Emperor had lost his self-reliance; and when on the afternoon of the 14th his friends were gathered together, he asked their advice on the simple alternative, whether he should attempt to escape or should give himself up to the English. Savary and Bertrand recommended the latter course,

Montholon and Gourgaud urged that they should attempt flight, and if they found the way barred, then they might go on board the Bellerophon. The former counsel prevailed, and Bertrand returned that evening to the Bellerophon with the intelligence that Buonaparte would come on board next morning, in the event of his not receiving a safe-conduct to the United States before that time. Las Cases went on board the Bellerophon the same evening, to signify the Emperor's intention, and to request that Baron Gourgaud, the bearer of a letter from the Emperor to the Prince Regent, might be provided with a passage to England as quickly as was consistent with Captain Maitland's arrangements; and on the following morning Napoleon himself, with his suite, embarked on board the Bellerophon, putting himself, as he said, "under the protection of the laws of England," to which remark Captain Maitland answered only by a low bow. The Slaney, Captain Sartorius, with Marshal Gourgaud bearing Buonaparte's letter to the Prince Regent, and with Captain Maitland's despatches, reached Lord Keith at Plymouth on the forenoon of 22d July. His lordship immediately sent on Captain Sartorius, who had been present when Napoleon came on board the Bellerophon, to carry the news to the Admiralty. The intelligence, however, had reached England two days before; and Lord Keith had already despatched a schooner to Torbay to meet the Bellerophon, and to direct Cap-

tain Maitland to await further orders there; and to allow no communication with the shore except by express orders from himself or the Admiralty. Lord Keith offered to forward the letter of which Marshal Gourgaud was the bearer to the Government; but as that officer declined to deliver his charge to any except the Prince Regent, the Admiral was constrained to prohibit him from landing, and ordered him to be sent back to the Bellerophon as soon as that vessel arrived. On the 24th, the first lieutenant of the Bellerophon arrived at Plymouth with despatches from Captain Maitland, announcing the arrival of the Bellerophon at Torbay with Buonaparte on board; and two days after, Lord Keith, in accordance with instructions which he had just received, ordered Captain Maitland round to Plymouth Sound, where he arrived on the afternoon of the 26th. His previous orders against allowing any communications with the shore were again repeated with greater emphasis.

The situation was full of perplexity to all who had any responsibility connected with it; and Lord Keith was greatly relieved when, simultaneously with the arrival of the Bellerophon in Plymouth Sound, he received the orders of Government that Buonaparte was to be kept entirely sequestered on board; that his suite was to be reduced to four officers, exclusive of menials, the remainder being distributed into other vessels; that Buonaparte was

to be treated and addressed merely as a general officer; that the letter to the Prince Regent could only be delivered through the Admiral himself; and that all communication with the shore was to be rigorously forbidden to the French.

On receiving the instructions of Government, Lord Keith embodied the substance of them in a general order to the captains of his squadron, and stationed the Liffey and the Eurotas at a short distance on either side the Bellerophon, "as well for the purpose of preventing the escape of Buonaparte or any of his suite from that ship, as for restraining shore boats and others from approaching too close to her, either from curiosity or from any other motive. A constant watch of an officer, a quartermaster, and double sentinels, is to be kept by day, as well as a boat manned and armed alongside as a guard-boat." By night an armed boat under a lieutenant was to row guard and be relieved every hour. No boats were to be allowed to loiter about, or to approach the Bellerophon nearer than one cable's length. On the 27th, Lord Keith received the first intimation of the intentions of Government with regard to the disposal of his charge, in a private letter from Lord Melville.

"*Confidential.*

"ADMIRALTY, *25th July* 1815.

"MY DEAR LORD,—It would appear that the yards were manned when Buonaparte visited the Superb

(which was an unnecessary visit); that he insists upon being treated with royal respect; that he invites Captain Maitland and other officers to dine with him; and, in short, that if we do not interfere, the same follies in this respect are likely to be committed as were exhibited last year by some officers in the Mediterranean. I have written the enclosed, which may assist you in putting a stop to anything of that kind, and which you can show when it may be necessary. I think we shall send Buonaparte to St Helena, and that Sir George Cockburn's appointment as Commander-in-Chief on the Cape station, which was suspended, will now go forward; and that he will convey this prisoner to St Helena, and remain there for some time. We must take it under the King's military authority, to which the Court of Directors, I believe, will not object. If Buonaparte or his suite are desirous of writing letters, they must be sent through you, open, or addressed to some member of the Government. You had better transmit them all to the Admiralty, unless there is anything very confidential which you may prefer sending direct to me.—Believe me, my dear lord, &c.,

"MELVILLE.

"VISCOUNT KEITH."

The enclosure to which Lord Melville alludes in this letter was as follows:—

"*Private.*

"ADMIRALTY, 25*th July* 1815.

"MY DEAR LORD,—On conversing with the officer who came to England in the Bellerophon with the despatches from Sir Henry Hotham and Captain Maitland, I think it would appear that Buonaparte had been allowed to assume a great deal more state and even authority, and had been treated with more submissiveness, than belongs to his situation as a prisoner of war or to his rank as a general officer, which is all that can be allowed to him in this country. No British officer would treat his prisoner with inhumanity, and the recollection of the station which he had so long held in Europe would naturally, and almost involuntarily, lead an officer to abstain from any line of conduct that could be construed into insult, and therefore to go rather beyond than to fall short of due respect. But such indulgent feelings must be restrained within proper limits; and I will be obliged to your lordship to give such hints on this subject as may appear to you necessary. — Believe me, my dear lord, &c., MELVILLE."

Meantime extreme anxiety prevailed amongst Buonaparte's suite, who drew the most sinister conclusions from the reserved demeanour of the British officers, and the silence with which they repelled all attempts to learn something of their future destination. Notwithstanding Lord Keith's circumspection,

letters from friends in London had reached several members of the suite, containing hints that Buonaparte's deportation to St Helena was under the consideration of the British Cabinet. The officers had not dared to tell Napoleon, but he himself had begun to fear the worst from the restraint under which he now found himself placed. He dictated a protestation against his treatment, and on the same night means were found to corrupt a sailor, who swam ashore and despatched the document to London to "*un célèbre jurisconsulte*," as Montholon says — doubtless Sir Samuel Romilly. Buonaparte expressed great anxiety to see the Admiral; and on the 28th, Lord Keith went on board the Bellerophon and paid a formal visit to the ex-Emperor. In this interview, which did not last more than five-and-twenty minutes, the Admiral respectfully listened to Buonaparte's complaints and remonstrances, informed him that he had no instructions to make any communication on the part of the Government, but that he daily expected a special messenger. Napoleon's tone was lofty and indignant; Lord Keith was scrupulously polite and reticent. The ex-Emperor demanded that his lordship should write directly to the Prince Regent for information as to how he was to be disposed of; the Admiral answered that such a step would exceed the instructions he had received. The latter could scarcely have failed to think on the great changes which had taken place since the last

time he and his prisoner had been at close quarters. Since Major Buonaparte and Captain Elphinstone had fought against each other at Toulon, the fortunes of war had kept them far apart. Their last encounter had been when Elphinstone had carried off the Royalist fugitives from Toulon under the fire of Buonaparte's guns thundering from Fort Eguillette, the night when the city was evacuated; and what eventful years had passed in the meantime —eventful to Lord Keith, but much more eventful to his illustrious prisoner!

On the morning of the 30th, Lord Keith received advice that Sir Henry Bunbury was on his way down as a special commissioner, bearing the resolutions of Government with regard to the fate of Buonaparte; and the same evening Sir Henry himself arrived with the following letter from Lord Melville:—

"ADMIRALTY, 28*th July* 1815.

"MY LORD,—As it may be convenient to General Buonaparte that he should be apprised without further delay of the intentions of the British Government respecting him, your lordship is at liberty to communicate to him the information contained in this letter.

"It would be inconsistent with our duty to this country and to his Majesty's allies if we were to leave to General Buonaparte the means or oppor-

tunity of again disturbing the peace of Europe and renewing all the calamities of war. It is therefore unavoidable that he should be restrained in his personal liberty to whatever extent may be necessary to secure our first and paramount object.

"The island of St Helena has been selected for his future residence. The climate is healthy, and the local situation will admit of his being treated with more indulgence than would be compatible with an adequate security elsewhere. Of the persons who have been brought to England with General Buonaparte, he will be allowed to select (with the exception of Generals Savary and L'Allemand) three officers, who, together with his surgeon, will be permitted to accompany him to St Helena. Twelve domestics, including the servants of the officers, will also be allowed. It must be distinctly understood that all those individuals will be liable to restraint during their attendance upon him and their residence at St Helena; and they will not be permitted to withdraw from thence without the sanction of Government.

"Rear-Admiral Sir George Cockburn, who is appointed to the chief command at the Cape of Good Hope and the adjoining seas, will convey General Buonaparte and his attendants to St Helena, and will receive detailed instructions respecting the execution of that service. Sir George Cockburn will probably be ready to embark in the course of a few days, and

it is therefore desirable that General Buonaparte should make without delay the selection of the persons who are to accompany him.—I have the honour to be, &c., MELVILLE.

"VISCOUNT KEITH."

Lord Melville also wrote in a private letter to the Admiral: "As it will probably be more agreeable to you that some person should accompany you at the conference which it will be necessary for you to have with Buonaparte, and as it will also be convenient that, besides your written details, we should have a verbal report of such matters as you could not well introduce into your statement of what passed at the conference, Sir Henry Bunbury will attend you on board the Bellerophon, if you see no objection to it. Buonaparte will probably ask many questions and make many demands on points which are not noticed in my other letter, in answer to all of which you can only refer him to Government and undertake to convey his wishes."

On the forenoon of the 31st, Lord Keith and Sir Henry Bunbury went on board the Bellerophon, and the memorable interview took place in which the captive Emperor was informed of his fate. At Lord Keith's request Sir Henry Bunbury drew up a complete memorandum of the conversation which took place; and this report gives the best account of the scene that ensued.

"*Memorandum of what passed at the Conference between Admiral Lord Keith and myself with Napoleon Buonaparte, on the* 31*st July* 1815.

"We went on board the Bellerophon between eleven and twelve o'clock. Buonaparte was alone in the inner cabin. We were announced, and were admitted immediately. After I had been introduced and Buonaparte had put a few trivial questions, Lord Keith produced a copy of the letter from Lord Melville containing the orders of his Majesty's Government, and tendered it to Buonaparte. He inquired if it was in French; and on being told it was in English, he observed that it would be useless to him, and that it would be necessary to translate it. Upon this Lord Keith began to read the paper aloud in French, but Buonaparte appeared not to hear distinctly, or not to comprehend; and after a line or two had been read, he took the paper from Lord Keith's hands and proposed to me that I should translate. I believe he meant that I should make a written translation, but I preferred reading it aloud in French.

"Napoleon listened attentively to the whole without interrupting me, and appeared as if he had been previously aware of what was to be communicated to him. At the conclusion, Lord Keith asked Buonaparte if he wished to have a written translation

made; but he answered, No; that he comprehended the substance perfectly, that the translation had been sufficiently good. He received the paper and laid it upon the table, and after a pause he began by declaring his solemn protest against this proceeding of the British Government; that they had not the right to dispose of him in that manner; and he appealed to the British people and to the laws of the country. Buonaparte asked what was the tribunal, or if there was not a tribunal, where he might prefer his appeal against the illegality and injustice of the decision taken by the British Government. 'I am come here voluntarily,' said he; '*me placer sous les foyers le votre nation*, and to claim the rights of hospitality. I am not even a prisoner of war. If I were a prisoner of war, you would be bound to treat me *selon le droit des gens;* but I am come to this country a passenger on board one of your ships of war, after a previous negotiation with its commander. If he had told me I was to be a prisoner I should not have come. I asked him if he was willing to receive me and my suite on board and to carry me to England. *Admiral* Maitland answered that he would—and this after having received, and after telling me that he had received, the special orders of his Government concerning me. *C'était donc un piège qu'on m'a tendu.* In coming on board a British ship of war, I confided myself to the hospitality of the British nation as much as if I had entered one of their towns

—une vaisseau, une village, tout cela est égal. Quant à l'isle de St Helena, c'est l'arrêt de ma mort. I protest against being sent thither, and I protest against being imprisoned in a fortress in this country. I demand to be received as an English citizen. I know, indeed, that I cannot be admitted to the rights of an Englishman at first. Some years are requisite to entitle one to be domiciliated. Well, let the Prince Regent place me during that time under any surveillance he may think proper. Let me be put in a country-house in the centre of the island, thirty leagues from the sea. Place a commissioner about me to examine my correspondence and to report my actions; and if the Prince Regent should require my parole, perhaps I would give it. There I might have a certain degree of personal liberty, and could enjoy the liberty of literature. In St Helena I should not live three months: with my habits and constitution it would be immediate death. I am used to ride twenty leagues a-day. What am I to do on this little rock at the end of the world? The climate is too hot for me. No, I will not go to St Helena; Botany Bay is better than St Helena. If your Government wishes to put me to death, they may kill me here. It is not worth while to send me to St Helena. I prefer death to St Helena; and what good is my death to do you? I can do you no harm. I am no longer a sovereign, I am a simple individual. Besides, times and affairs are altered.

What danger could result from my living as a private person in the heart of England under surveillance, and restricted in any way the Government might imagine necessary?'

"Buonaparte returned frequently to the circumstances under which he had come on board the Bellerophon, insisted that he had been perfectly free in his choice, and that he had preferred confiding to the hospitality and generosity of the British people rather than take any other course. 'Why should I not have gone to my father-in-law, or to the Emperor of Russia, who is my personal friend? We have become enemies because he wanted to annex Poland to his dominions—and my popularity among the Poles was in his way; but otherwise he was my friend, and he would not have treated me in this manner. If your Government acts thus, it will disgrace itself in the eyes of Europe; and even your own people will disapprove and blame its conduct. Besides, you do not know, perhaps, what a feeling my death will create both in France and Italy, and how greatly the character of England will suffer if my blood rests here. There is a high opinion of the justice and honour of England. If you kill me, your reputation will be lost in France and Italy, and it will cost the loss of many Englishmen. There never has been a similar instance in the history of the world; and what was there to force me to the step I took? The tricolor flag was still flying in Bordeaux,

at Nantes, at Rochefort; the army has not submitted at this hour. I could have joined them; or, if I had chosen to remain in France, what could have prevented my remaining concealed for years among a people who were all attached to me? But I preferred to settle as a private individual in England.'

"Buonaparte reverted again to his negotiations with Captain Maitland, the assurance that he should be carried to England, the honours and attentions shown to him by Captain Maitland and Admiral Hotham. 'And after all, has this been a snare laid for me? If you now kill me, it will be an eternal disgrace to the Prince Regent, to your Government, and to the nation. *Ce sera une lâcheté sans exemple. J'ai offert au Prince Regent la plus belle page de son histoire.* I am his enemy, and I place myself at his discretion. I have been the greatest enemy to your country. I have made war upon you for twenty years, and I do you the highest honour, and give you the greatest proof of my confidence, by placing myself voluntarily in the hands of my most inveterate enemies. Remember what I have been, and how I stood among the sovereigns of Europe. This courted my protection; that gave me his daughter; all sought my friendship. I was an Emperor, acknowledged so by all the Powers of Europe except Great Britain; and she had acknowledged me and treated with me as Chief Consul of France.' Then turning to the table and laying his finger on the

paper, 'And,' said he, 'your Government have not the right to style me General Buonaparte. I am at least as much a sovereign as when I was on the throne of France. I was as much a sovereign in Elba as the king was in France. We had each our flags. I had my flag,' he repeated. 'We had each our ships, our troops. To be sure,' he said, smiling, 'mine were on a small scale. I had 600 soldiers, and he had 200,000; *mais enfin je lui ai fait la guerre; je l'ai battu, je l'ai chassé du pays, et je l'ai détrôné.* But there was nothing in all this to alter my position or to deprive me of my rank as one of the sovereigns of Europe.'

"Napoleon spoke with little or no interruption from Lord Keith or myself. He sometimes paused as for a reply. I could only say that I was little more than bearer of the despatches to Lord Keith; that I was not authorised to enter into discussions; and that I could only undertake to hear General Buonaparte's representations, and to communicate them to the King's Ministers. I observed that I felt convinced that the chief motive which had made Government fix upon St Helena was that its local situation admitted of his enjoying there a greater degree of indulgence than could be allowed in any part of Great Britain. Buonaparte immediately said, '*Non, non, pour St Hélène je n'irai pas; vous ne voudriez pas y aller—vous, monsieur, ni vous, milord.*' He then renewed his protest against being imprisoned or sent to St

Helena. '*Je ne sors pas d'ici. Je n'irai pas à St Hélène. Je ne suis pas un Hercule, mais vous ne m'y menerez pas. Je prefers la mort ici.* You found me free; send me back again. Replace me in the state you found me, and which I quitted only under the impression that your Admiral was to land me in England. If your Government will not do this, and will not permit me to reside here, let me go to the United States. But I appeal to your laws, and I throw myself on their protection to prevent my being sent to St Helena, or being shut up in a fortress.'

"Buonaparte inquired when the Northumberland was likely to arrive and to be ready to sail, and he pressed the Admiral to take no step towards removing him from the Bellerophon before Government should have been informed of what had passed on this occasion, and should have signified their final decision. He added, that as to going on board the Northumberland, he could not do it. '*Je n'irai pas—je ne sortirai pas d'ici.*'

"Lord Keith appeared to think that even if the Northumberland should arrive, this delay might be granted. As he addressed me, I answered that I could give no opinion upon this point, and that it rested with his lordship to decide.

"Buonaparte urged me to acquaint his Majesty's Government without the least delay of what had passed. I told him that I should despatch a written

report immediately; and that I should remain myself at Plymouth until the next day, in case he should have anything further to state. Lord Keith asked Napoleon if he would wish to put his answer in writing. He said, '*Non, ce monsieur entend bien le français, il fera le procès verbal, il est dans une situation eminente et il doit être homme; il rendra au gouvernement la réponse qui j'ai donné.*

"After some pause, Buonaparte began again. He went over the same grounds, dwelling particularly upon his having been free to come or not, and his having decided to come here, from understanding that Captain Maitland, acting according to the orders of his Government, would undertake to bring him in safety; upon the illegality of sentencing him to death or imprisonment; and his desire to appeal formally to the laws and the people of England; upon the disgrace which would attach to the nation, and particularly to the Government. He repeated his desire to live in England as a private citizen under any restrictions, and with a commissioner to watch him, 'who would also be of great use to me for the first year or two, in showing me what I ought to do;' and he added, 'I will give my word of honour that I will not hold any correspondence with France, and that I will not engage in any political affairs whatever.' Finally, he repeated his fixed determination not to go to St Helena.

"We made our bows and retired. In a few min-

utes Buonaparte sent for Lord Keith again. I did not return with his lordship, who remained a very short time.

"H. G. BUNBURY."

"Upon re-entering the cabin," writes Lord Keith, "he asked me to advise him. I replied, 'I am an officer and have discharged my duty. I have left the heads of my instructions with you, in order that you may observe upon them if you consider it necessary.' I added, 'Sir, if you have anything more to urge, I must beg to call in Sir Henry Bunbury;' to which he replied, 'Oh no, it is unnecessary.' He then said, 'Can you, after what has passed, detain me until you hear from London?' to which I answered, 'That will depend upon the arrival of the other Admiral, of whose instructions I am ignorant.' He then said, 'Is there any tribunal to which I can apply?' to this I replied, 'I am no lawyer; but I believe none. I am satisfied there is every disposition on the part of the British Government to render your situation as comfortable as is consistent with prudence.' He immediately took up the papers from the table, and said, with animation, 'How so, St Helena?' to which I observed, 'Sir, it surely is preferable to being confined in a smaller place in England, or sent to France, or perhaps Russia.' '*Russie! Dieu garde,*' was his reply. I then withdrew."

Montholon adds little to the vivid idea of this interview, which we draw from the brief and unadorned accounts of Sir Henry Bunbury and the Admiral. Napoleon had evidently hoped that his words would have had greater weight with the two officers, who, fortified by the plain letters of their instructions, were proof alike against his appeals and his menaces. The same evening Lord Keith received Napoleon's formal protest, which was simply a reiteration of the arguments that he had used in the previous interview—viz., that he had come on board the Bellerophon as the guest of England, and on the assurance that Captain Maitland would convey him to that country; that he preferred death to going to St Helena; and that he wished to live in England under the protection of the laws, and would hold no communication with France or mix in its politics. The protest was at once sent on to Lord Melville, from whom the Admiral had just received the following letter:—

"*Private.*

"ADMIRALTY, *29th July* 1815.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I have little with which to trouble you to-day, except to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 27th instant, with the letter from Buonaparte to the Prince Regent. I have sent the letter to Lord Bathurst. The Northumberland was paid this morning at the Nore,

and we understand by telegraph that they meant her to proceed so far this afternoon. She will probably be two days at Spithead, where the 53d Regiment will embark in the Bucephalus and Ceylon; and if they are not sufficient, the Northumberland will take the remainder. The Havannah frigate and six brigs, which have been placed under Sir George Cockburn's orders, are to assemble at Plymouth.

"I am not surprised that Buonaparte does not relish the idea of St Helena, as I have understood before that he disliked it particularly. That circumstance does not alter my opinion as to its being the most eligible situation for him. I am glad, however, that he submits quietly to be unemperored; and I trust that all our officers and men will agree so far with him, and consider him only in his true light.—Believe me, my dear Lord, &c.,

"MELVILLE."

Sir Henry Bunbury returned to London on the afternoon of 1st August, and Lord Keith was left to wait until the arrival of the Northumberland should free his hands of the serious responsibilities which the presence of his captive entailed. Every day fresh inconvenience was felt from Buonaparte's presence, necessitating change of precautions and orders, which it was as disagreeable to the Admiral to have to issue as to Buonaparte to be subjected to. The crowds that were attracted towards the Bellerophon

on the chance of seeing the captive as he came to the gangway in the course of his after-dinner promenade, required that they should be kept at a considerable distance, and the boats of the men-of-war had to row guard every evening to enforce this arrangement. The officers in Napoleon's suite also gave the Admiral much trouble: some demanding to be sent to St Helena with their master, others insisting that they must not be treated as prisoners, but allowed to go on shore. Both Savary and L'Allemand claimed Lord Keith's intercession for their being allowed to share Napoleon's exile in long letters, to which the Admiral could only reply that their wishes would be transmitted to the proper quarter.

The 2d and 3d August passed without any particular occurrence. Contrary to his usual custom, Buonaparte did not show himself, but remained in the after-cabin. The crowds of boats which came round the Bellerophon were, however, as numerous as ever, and were with much difficulty kept from approaching the ship.

On the evening of 3d August, about nine o'clock, an indistinct telegraphic message reached Plymouth: "Tonnant" (Admiral's flag-ship), "Bellerophon, frigate — sail — Start." Lord Keith instantly issued orders to the Tonnant, Bellerophon, and Eurotas frigate to make ready for sea at a moment's notice. He did not, however, sail that evening, partly on account of his doubts about the accuracy of the

message, but chiefly because letters and despatches, which would doubtless throw clearer light on the intentions of Government, were due from London next morning. He was not disappointed, for early on the 4th an express reached him with the following letter from Lord Melville :—

"*Private.*

"ADMIRALTY, *2d August* 1815.

"MY LORD,—You will perceive by my other letters, what you probably anticipated, that we cannot allow of any alteration in our instructions respecting the disposal of Buonaparte. He must therefore submit, and I hope that he will not compel Sir George Cockburn or Captain Maitland to resort to measures of personal compulsion. I shall be sorry if all his attendants refuse to accompany him ; but if they shall, there is no help for it—he must still go. I should particularly wish that the surgeon should go with him, if it were only for a limited time, till his place could be supplied by another in whom Buonaparte might place confidence; but as Lord Bathurst's instructions do not admit of any expectation being held out that any of Buonaparte's attendants will be allowed to quit the island during his life, the surgeon now with him ought not to be indulged in that hope.

"You will receive what is perhaps, and most probably, unnecessary—I mean an official instruction ON NO ACCOUNT to permit Buonaparte to come on

shore. In some of the newspapers a notion is held out that he may be brought out of the ship by a writ of *habeas corpus*. The serious public inconvenience and danger which would arise from such an occurrence, even though he might not escape and be remanded by the judge as a prisoner of war, renders it indispensably our duty to prevent it, and also to protect you, or rather Captain Maitland and Sir George Cockburn, by the peremptory order which we have sent you. If we were to receive an intimation of any such proceeding going forward here, we should order the Bellerophon to sea, and to cruise off the Start or elsewhere, on some assigned rendezvous to meet the Northumberland. We may possibly have to apply to Parliament for their sanction to what we are doing respecting Buonaparte and the safe custody of his person, but we must do our duty in the meantime.

"Whatever expense is incurred in the maintenance of the party in the Bellerophon and Liffey will be defrayed on application of the captains. It is an extraordinary case, and we must pay accordingly."

Official orders of the same stringent character indicated by Lord Melville reached Lord Keith along with this letter, as well as instructions to hasten the departure of the Bellerophon from Plymouth with all the speed that might be practicable. Lord Keith immediately went on board his flag-ship, and it was

fortunate for him that he had been so prompt in his movements. Scarcely had the Admiral left his quarters, when a person named Mackenrot from the Court of King's Bench arrived, and inquired anxiously for him. Lord Keith had left his house by the kitchen-door to be rowed to the Tonnant, as the King's Bench messenger entered by the front. Even Lady Keith did not know where he was gone. The man's object was to serve a writ on Lord Keith to produce Buonaparte as a witness in a libel case, in which Sir Alexander Cochrane was plaintiff and Mackenrot himself defendant. Had the man arrived a few minutes earlier, the consequences might have led to a serious complication; but fortunately Mr Meek, the Admiral's trusted secretary, was a gentleman of judgment and resource, and managed to detain the messenger until he had got a warning conveyed on board the Tonnant to the Admiral. Lord Keith at once removed from the Tonnant to the Eurotas, with the messenger hard on his heels. When Mackenrot reached the Eurotas, he found that the Admiral had gone ashore at Cawsand Bay. The exciting chase continued, the scent getting colder on shore, where all trace of the Admiral was lost, and the messenger had to abandon his hunt. The Admiral got signals made to the Prometheus as she stood in from the westward; and for better security cruised about in her until dusk, when he felt safe to return to his flag-ship. Next

day the following letter, with a copy of the writ, was sent on board the Actæon for conveyance to the Tonnant:—

"King's Arms Tavern, Plymouth Dock,
Aug. 4, 1815, 3 o'clock P.M.

"My Lord,—I arrived this morning from London with a writ issued by the Court of King's Bench to subpœna Napoleon Buonaparte as a witness in a trial impending in that Court.

"I was extremely anxious of waiting on your lordship, most humbly to solicit your permission to serve such process on your said prisoner; but unfortunately could not obtain any admittance into your presence, neither at your own house nor on board H.M.S. Tonnant, where your lordship was said to be.

"I humbly entreat your lordship to consider that an evasion to give due facility to the execution of my process would amount to a high contempt against that honourable Court from whence it issues, and that under the continuance of such circumstances, I shall be under the painful necessity of making my return accordingly.

"Leaving the issue to your lordship's discretion, I shall remain here until to-morrow night; but to remove all doubts from your mind, I beg to enclose a copy of the writ for your perusal, having already exhibited the original to Sir Thos. John Duckworth,

as likewise to your secretary,—and have the honour to subscribe myself, with the greatest respect, &c.,

"A. MACKENROT.

"ADMIRAL LORD KEITH."

The writ ran thus:—

"George the Third, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, to Napoleon Buonaparte, Admiral Willaumez, and Jerome Buonaparte, greeting: We command you and every of you that all other things set aside and ceasing every excuse, that you and every of you be and appear in your proper persons before our right trusty and well beloved Edward Lord Ellenborough, Chief Justice assigned to that Pleas in our Court before us on Friday the tenth day of November by nine of the Clock in the forenoon of the same day, to testify the truth according to your knowledge in a certain action now in our Court before us, in our said Court depending between Sir Alexander Forrester Cochrane, Knight, Plaintiff, and Antony Mackenrot, Defendant, of a Plea of Trespass on the part of the defendant, and at the aforesaid day by a jury of the country between the parties aforesaid to the Plea aforesaid to be tried; and that you nor any of you shall in no wise omit under the penalty of one hundred pounds:—Witness: Edward Lord Ellenborough, in Westminster,

the fourteenth day of June, in the fifty-fifth year of our reign."

Lord Keith received the letter and copy of the writ on the afternoon of the 5th, when he and his prisoner had already sailed, and thus ended this farcical interlude in a drama of the highest historical dignity, which, but for the decision of Lord Keith and the promptitude of Mr Meek, might have exercised a serious influence upon the intentions of Government.

A few hours after Lord Keith got back to his ship, on the afternoon of the 4th, an Admiralty messenger had boarded the Bellerophon, with further instructions to the following effect:—

"*Secret and confidential.*

"ADMIRALTY OFFICE,
3d August 1815.

"MY LORD,—As it appears that considerable inconvenience is occasioned by the continuance of General Buonaparte in Plymouth Sound, I have to signify to your lordship the commands of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that you do immediately, on the receipt of this letter, order Rear-Admiral Sir B. Hallowell in the Tonnant to take the Bellerophon under his command, together with any frigate you may please to appropriate to this service; and putting to sea with all possible expedition, pro-

ceed to cruise with the three ships (the Bellerophon having the General and his suite on board) off the Start, or such other rendezvous as your lordship may judge proper, until they shall be joined by Sir George Cockburn in the Northumberland; when General Buonaparte and the persons who are to accompany him to St Helena are to be transported to the latter ship, which is to proceed immediately afterwards in execution of their lordships' former orders. In case of unfavourable weather, Sir Benjamin Hallowell is authorised to take shelter in Torbay, or such other anchorage as your lordship may appoint, and the transfer of General Buonaparte to the Northumberland, if it cannot be made at sea, which would be most desirable, may be made at the said anchorage. Sir George Cockburn may perhaps fall in with this squadron before he reaches Plymouth; but as it is conceived that he may have some arrangements to make which may make it convenient to him to come to Plymouth, Sir Benjamin Hallowell should acquaint him that he should proceed to the Sound or Cawsand Bay, and should afterwards return to the rendezvous, or the anchorage appointed for the purpose of taking Buonaparte on board.

"On the arrival of Sir George at Plymouth, your lordship will communicate these instructions to that officer, and you will urge him to make his arrangements at that port, and sail again in execution of his orders with the greatest expedition. My lords

reckon confidently on the zeal and vigilance of Sir Benjamin Hallowell to keep the Bellerophon in sight, and to prevent any communication with her whatever; and when the General and those who accompany him shall be safely on board the Northumberland, and that ship has proceeded on her voyage, he is to return with the ships to Plymouth Sound, the remaining part of Buonaparte's suite continuing on board the Bellerophon for further orders.

"Those persons of Buonaparte's suite who are not on board the Bellerophon should be transferred to the Tonnant, unless they should already be in the frigate which may be appointed to accompany these ships.

"It has been stated to their lordships that some persons of the General's suite on board the Bellerophon have used violent and threatening language. Your lordship will therefore, if you judge it necessary, take measures for removing any such persons from the Bellerophon to the Tonnant.

"In the event of General Buonaparte or any of his suite escaping to the shore—which, however, it may be hoped is impossible—your lordship will take the most active measures in securing them and sending them back on board the ship. It seems hardly necessary to observe to your lordship that the most profound secrecy should be observed on the subject of the proceedings directed in this letter, which in-

deed need be communicated only to Sir Benjamin Hallowell and Sir George Cockburn.—I have, &c.,

"J. W. CROKER."

Lord Keith had, however, previously made all his arrangements for superintending in person the transfer of Buonaparte from the Bellerophon to the Northumberland; and to have handed over the duty to Sir Benjamin Hallowell would have caused unnecessary delay, at a time when such episodes as the Court of King's Bench's interposition showed that despatch was of the first importance. He replied on the night of the 4th, while the Tonnant was off the Bolt, that he was convoying the Bellerophon in his own flag-ship, in company with the Eurotas, and would himself be responsible for the due execution of the orders of Government; that he had commanded Sir B. Hallowell to hoist his flag during his absence on board the Ville de Paris, and directed Admiral Duckworth to open and forward all despatches of importance. In assuming this right to deviate from the strict letter of the Admiralty's instructions, Lord Keith was only acting upon the confidence that the Government had expressly reposed in him; and his proposal to undertake the duty in person was gratefully acknowledged. "I am most thankful you were at Plymouth," writes Lord Melville, a little later on, "not merely to execute but to anticipate our wishes. I hope your troubles re-

specting Buonaparte are by this time over. . . . We ordered Sir B. Hallowell to sea because we did not wish to give you that trouble, but I am glad you went."

On the same eventful day, Lord Keith had instructed Captain Maitland to inform Buonaparte that the final orders of the Government had arrived; that he was to be transferred to the Northumberland for removal to St Helena; and that it only remained to select the limited suite whom he wished to accompany him. If Napoleon refused to exercise this privilege, it would then be the duty of the Admiral to choose his attendants. When Buonaparte received this message he expressed a wish to see Lord Keith; but in the state of the weather it was impossible for the Admiral to comply with the ex-Emperor's wish. The only incident of the 5th August was the presentation of a formal protest, which Buonaparte had dictated the day before to the Count Las Cases, and in which he went over all the arguments that he had so often reiterated, ending by making his appeal to History, and inquiring what answer the English people would have to make to its verdict? As H.M.S. Norge had joined company on her way from Jamaica to Spithead, Lord Keith consented to allow this protest to be sent on by her captain for Lord Melville.

On the forenoon of the 6th, the Northumberland, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir George Cock-

burn, and accompanied by the Ceylon and Bucephalus troop-ships, appeared to the eastward; but as the weather was stormy, and a heavy sea was rolling, Lord Keith signalled to the squadron to stand for Torbay, where it anchored under Berry Head at half-past three in the afternoon. Every preparation was at once made for the great event which was to finally secure Europe from the despot who had so long made it one great battle-field. The Actæon was stationed off the Start, with orders for all the vessels intending to accompany the Northumberland to rendezvous at once off that point.

Scarcely had the vessel anchored, when the Admiral signalled to the Bellerophon that preparations were to be made for the transfer of Napoleon. Soon after Captain Maitland came on board, with a request from Buonaparte that Lord Keith would wait upon him; he also stated that Count Bertrand was desirous of a personal interview. The Admiral expressed his willingness to receive Bertrand, who shortly afterwards came on board the Tonnant.

"Count Bertrand," wrote Lord Keith to Lord Melville, "commenced the conversation by inquiring into the intentions of Government with regard to Generals Savary and L'Allemand; but on being explicitly informed that there were no orders respecting them, and that the exception against them remained in full force, he gave me the names of the persons whom it was proposed should accompany

Buonaparte to St Helena. He was then desired to prepare a list of the said persons in writing, as he requested, in the name of Buonaparte, that Count Las Cases might be permitted to go in the capacity of secretary instead of the surgeon, who was unwilling to accompany him, and whom he did not wish to take against his inclination. Sir George Cockburn and myself were of opinion that this was a concession of which his Majesty's Government would not disapprove, and we therefore acceded to it; but to a most pressing solicitation that a person named Prontowski—who was formerly a captain in the Polish service, but had accompanied Buonaparte to Elba, and had there as well as since served as a private—might be allowed to go as a domestic, we considered it right to give a most decided and positive refusal; and as permission was also requested for the surgeon of the Bellerophon to attend him, on account of his speaking the Italian language, the Count was informed that that could only be taken into consideration upon a special application being received in writing, especially as the number of persons allowed by Government would be complete without a surgeon, from the Count Las Cases being permitted to go as secretary."

Having dismissed Count Bertrand, and instructed him to announce to Buonaparte that they would at once wait upon him, the two admirals went on board the Bellerophon, and an interview took place,

of which Lord Keith transmits the following report to Lord Melville :—

"At half-past eight o'clock in the evening, accompanied by my secretary, Mr Meek (the latter of whom I considered it necessary to take with me as a witness, in consequence of Sir George Cockburn being about to leave the kingdom), I went on board the Bellerophon, and after the customary civilities upon entering the after-cabin (where the General had remained since leaving Plymouth Sound on the 4th instant, without coming on deck or making his appearance at table), Buonaparte commenced the conversation by protesting against the measures adopted with regard to him by the British Government, repeating in detail and almost verbatim the language and reasoning contained in his protest, to which he referred, observing that he came freely on board the Bellerophon; that he was not a prisoner; that he threw himself upon the hospitality of the country upon which he had made war for upwards of twenty years; that he sought an asylum there under the protection of the laws; that he embarked, even, at the instigation of Captain Maitland, who told him that he had orders from his Government to convey him to England; that, as soon as he was on board the Bellerophon, he was entitled to the protection of the laws of the country; that all Captain Maitland had done was only a snare to entrap him; that he was entitled to all the privileges of a *habeas corpus*, but was deprived of

the means of obtaining it, and thereby prevented from frustrating the measures now pursued against his rights and liberty; that with regard to the orders to consider him only as General Buonaparte, the Government acted with injustice and inconsistency, as they had treated with him as First Consul, had received his ambassador, and had sent an ambassador to him; 'but,' added he, with a smile, 'that was a trifle—that was nothing compared with their present conduct' towards him, which was a violation of every principle of justice, humanity, and generosity, and which he was morally certain, although he was but indifferently informed of matters in England, was not less contrary to the wishes of the English people than to those of Europe in general.

"I then observed that the protest had been forwarded to Government the moment that it had been received; and that as both myself and Sir George Cockburn were officers in the execution of a duty prescribed to us by our superiors, we could only listen to the remarks he had made, but were not authorised to answer them. The General replied that he was perfectly aware of it; but as we were the only persons permitted to approach him, he owed it to himself and to the world to protest before us, and he did it in the most earnest manner, against the measures pursued by our Government with regard to him, adding that he trusted a faithful report would be made of all he had said.

"I then asked General Buonaparte if he had read the extract from Sir George Cockburn's instructions, which that officer had delivered to Count Bertrand for his information. He replied that he had not; that the Count had not yet finished the translation, but that it was a matter of no consequence whatever, as the British Government appeared to have taken its course of proceedings with respect to him; and seemed resolved on pursuing that course even to his death.

"To an inquiry of Sir George Cockburn when he would be ready to remove to the Northumberland, Buonaparte replied that any hour after breakfast (which was usually about ten o'clock) would suit him."

The matter of fact report of this interview, as given by Lord Keith, differs materially from the dramatic description of Montholon; but we need not scruple to accept the former as the more correct. Indeed the two narrators must have looked on the scene with very different eyes. To the Frenchman there was a grand and tragic dignity in the situation, which would be in a great measure lost to the English Admiral, who could only feel himself to be the instrument of his country's justice upon the enemy who had so long destroyed its peace and menaced its liberties. Montholon draws a very striking picture of Buonaparte waiting to receive the adieux of the two admirals, and of Lord Keith resigning himself to

the execution of an order "which belied the antecedents of a long and glorious career," stepping forward and saying, in a voice hoarse with emotion, "England demands of you your sword." It is a pity that so dramatic an incident, as well as the terrible and expressive silence with which Buonaparte is reported to have answered the request,[1] should have to be consigned to romance; but we are bound to believe that it can have sprung only from the agitated and excited imaginations of the ex-Emperor's suite. Orders had been issued regarding the arms of Napoleon and his attendants, but among Lord Keith's papers we have found no authority for supposing that he directly asked Buonaparte's sword on board the Bellerophon; and if he had done so he was not a man likely to have accepted silent indignation as a sufficient reply.

Shortly after the Admiral left the Bellerophon the Count Las Casas came on board the Tonnant, and presented to Lord Keith the following letter from Buonaparte, holding out a threat to demand judicial

[1] "L'Empereur par un mouvement convulsif posa la main sur cette epée, qu'un Anglais ose demandé. L'expression terrible de son regard fu sa seule réponse. Jamais elle n'avait été plus puissante plus sur humaine le vieil amiral se sentit foudroye. Sa grande taille s'affuisait sa tête blanchie par les annes tomba sur sa poitrine comme celle d'un coupable, qui s'humilie devant sa condamnation.

"L'Empereur garda son epée. Les deux amiraux saluérent avec un respect empreint d'une profonde émotion, et sortirent sans qu'aucune parole eut troublé l'impression solennelle qui nous dominait tous Anglais et Français."—Montholon, t. i. p. 113. Paris, 1847.

redress, which he well knew would not be granted to him, and which was probably only intended to delay his departure, in the hope that events, in which he had such confidence, might in the meantime act in his favour.

"My Lord,—On quitting Plymouth I sent you my protestation regarding the conduct observed with respect to me. Yesterday, when you did me the honour of coming to see me with Admiral Cockburn, I repeated that protestation.

"It appears to me, however, that without knowing the effect of these complaints, you require that I should quit the Bellerophon to go on board a vessel destined to conduct me to the place of my banishment. I send you the Count de Las Casas, to beg you to give up to him, first, the signed act of the authority which, without previous inquiry, without having heard the captain of the Bellerophon or any of those who received me, has arbitrarily decided that I am a prisoner of war, contrary to the most patent facts; since it is notorious that I came of my own free will and in good faith, as is proved by my letter to the Prince Regent, of which the captain had taken cognisance before receiving me.

"I beg you, milord, to give up to him, secondly, the signed decision which, after having declared that I was a prisoner, ordered that, in contradiction to the laws of the country and those of hospitality, I should

be dragged from the Bellerophon, to be deposited at a distance of two thousand leagues on a rock lost amid the ocean, in the middle of tropical heats. It is evidently a sentence of death which it would be difficult to resist in a temperature so broiling, and which is so sudden a change.

"My lord, I claim—I claim, I repeat—the benefits of your laws, especially those of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. Once placed under your flag in your harbour, with the tender of service and the promise of your captain, I cannot be arrested, deprived of my liberty, and placed in confinement, except according to your laws and by their forms.

"Finally, I shall also beg you, my lord, to furnish me with, thirdly, the signed warrant of those who, without any grounds except their own private resolution, wish to deprive me of my property, which is moreover of little value, and to impose on me persons as members of my suite, arrangements revolting to every person of delicate sentiments, and striking with surprise those who are acquainted with and who respect the laws.

"The purport of these documents is necessary to me for judicially claiming the protection of your laws against them, as well as for making a solemn appeal to sovereign and people on this strange and singular affair.

"You have yourself several times, my lord, expressed to me the pain which the execution of your

orders has caused you. I therefore do not know that I need reckon on a better interpreter in enabling me to set forth the precipitation, the rigour, and the injustice with which I have been treated.

"NAPOLEON.

"ON BOARD THE BELLEROPHON,
7th August 1815."

Lord Keith at once sat down and returned an answer by Count Las Cases:—

"H.B.M.'s SHIP TONNANT,
7th August 1815."

"SIR,—I have received by the Count Las Cases the letter which you have done me the honour to address to me, and I beg to assure you that I lost no time in forwarding to my Government the protest you refer to. The order for your removal from the Bellerophon is imperative, and as an officer I am bound to obey it; but it is a document that must remain in my possession, in common with all other orders.

"I have Captain Maitland's letters before me, by which it appears that nothing like a promise, or what could be construed into a promise, was made on his part; but on the contrary, a simple offer of good treatment and of being carried to England, and I am happy in thinking that both these objects have been fulfilled with all possible kindness and attention.

"The orders respecting your property are addressed to Rear-Admiral Sir George Cockburn, and as they appear reasonable, and are only calculated to prevent an improper use of an excessive sum, I am sure they will be executed with all possible delicacy.

"Of the laws I am not able to judge—my habits are of a different nature—but my study has always been to obey them in all the different countries that I have visited. It is true that I have said, in the interviews that I have had the honour to hold with you, that it was a painful duty to communicate anything of a disagreeable nature to any one—and I hope you will do me the justice to believe it true; but still I am to perform the duties of my situation. —I have the honour to be, &c.,

"KEITH, *Admiral.*

"His Excellency GENERAL BUONAPARTE."

The time had now come when the duty to which Lord Keith had for days back been looking forward with so much anxiety was to be discharged; and down to the time of their going on board the Bellerophon, both the admirals felt extremely doubtful as to the spirit in which Napoleon would be induced to go on board the Northumberland. Up to the morning of the 7th, Buonaparte had doggedly held to his protestation, and to his refusal to recognise the right of the British Government to deport him to St Helena; and he was evidently anxious to gain time, to allow

of his friends, among whom were not a few prominent members of Opposition, bringing intercession on his behalf to bear upon the Government. Lord Keith desired Admiral Cockburn to precede him on board the Bellerophon, to take an inventory of Buonaparte's effects, and thus prepare him in some measure for an immediate removal. A little before eleven o'clock the Admiral received a message from Sir George that all was completed, and set out in his barge with all due ceremony. "I then went on board the Bellerophon," he writes, "but found that the General was engaged with Count Bertrand. It was some time before I saw him, when he repeated his former protestations, and added, 'I do not voluntarily go from this ship or from England. It is you, Admiral, who take me.' To this I replied, 'I hope, sir, that you will not reduce an officer like me to do so disagreeable an act as to use force towards your person.' He answered, 'Oh no; you shall order me.' I replied, 'I shall attend you, at your convenience, in my barge. I beg not to hurry you.' He thanked me, and said he wished to speak to Bertrand. I then retired, and sent that officer into the after-cabin. It was nearly two hours after this period before the General finished his letters, conversations, and giving audience to the officers, some of whom shed tears, while he appeared to bear it well. He had a long interview with Count Bertrand and his wife, the latter of

whom, I believe, he did not wish to go to St Helena. He then came out of the cabin and said, 'I am at your orders.'

"Before leaving the Bellerophon, which was about half-past one o'clock, he thanked Captain Maitland for the attention he had received from him. He then turned to the officers and did the same, and added, 'To all your crew,' bowing at the same time to the ship's company. He was received on the quarter-deck with a guard, in the manner usual for a general officer, and went into the barge alongside, into which I also sent all those of his suite whom he chose to name—Count Bertrand and his wife, General Montholon and his wife, General Gourgaud, and Count Las Cases; and then followed myself, which induced him to observe, 'Do you take the trouble of going to the boat? I am obliged to you, Admiral.' In the boat he appeared to be in perfect good-humour, talking of Egypt, St Helena, of my former name being Elphinstone, and many other subjects; and joked with the ladies about being sea-sick. Upon arriving on board the Northumberland he was received by Rear-Admiral Sir George Cockburn on the gangway, and by a guard in the manner above mentioned. I accompanied him to look at the accommodation provided for him, with which he appeared to be well satisfied, saying, 'The apartments are convenient, and you see I carry with me my little green bed,' pointing to a small tent-bed.

Immediately afterwards I took my leave and withdrew."

In a private letter to a relative, Lord Keith adds the following particulars of his last conversations with Buonaparte :—

"*Tuesday, 13th August* 1815.

"Yesterday the birthday—a wine-party of eighteen ; to-morrow the ball on the like occasion. . . . I hope soon to have directions about the remaining Frenchmen, and then I am off. All you see in the papers is nonsense about Bonney.

"Bathurst never was in the ship. Lyttelton, Byng, and Lord Lowther came with Cockburn and wanted to go on board the Bellerophon, which I refused.

"He was anxious about his fate, no doubt, but always temperate and civil, even funny and jocose at times. Asked my advice about law, &c. &c. Not pleased at being styled General. 'If not Emperor, I am First Consul. You made treaties with me as such.'

"'Yes, sir ; but when you crushed the Commonwealth, you sank that title in Empereur.'

"He did say he would not quit England alive. I laughed. He said, 'Would you go to St Helena, Admiral? I will not leave this ship. You must take me by force.'

"'Surely you will not reduce an officer to a measure so disagreeable?' 'Oh no; but you shall order me.' And at the door of the outer cabin he said, 'Admiral, I have given you my solemn protest in writing. I now repeat that I will not go out of this ship but by force: you must order me.'

"'My barge is ready, and if you choose any to go in her, please to name them, and the ladies. It depends on you *alone*.' He went to the gangway, thanked Maitland and the officers, and then the men, bowed to all, and went into the boat. Bertrand, and Madame Montholon, and Madame Gourgaud, and Las Cases.

"I followed, and put the ladies beside him. He said, 'What! do you take the trouble to come too? Come and sit by me; we shall *cose*.' He talked of St Helena; laughed at the ladies being sea-sick; asked if that was the Tonnant of Aboukir—if the Bellerophon was old—why I changed my name from Elphinstone, which he knew me by ever since Toulon?

"When on board the Northumberland he talked to all, and asked questions very quick, and said, 'Let us look at the cabin.' Took me with him. Said, 'This is very good—better than the Bellerophon; I see my little green bed is in it.' We then came out on the deck, and he began to talk to the land officers, and I took leave of him and Sir G. C., and in an hour made the signal to weigh and part company.

"15*th*.—I am this moment returned from seeing the gentleman off—in good spirits. Bertrand, Las Cases, Gourgaud, Montholon, the two ladies, four *enfants*, twelve domestics. The doctor would not go. I sent that of the Bellerophon."

His trying mission discharged, Lord Keith returned to the Tonnant, and having seen the Northumberland weigh anchor for the Start, there to join the ships of war that were to convoy her to St Helena, the Tonnant, in company with the Bellerophon, Eurotas, Myrmidon, Dwarf, and Express, sailed for Plymouth, and dropped anchor there the following morning at ten o'clock. His first care was naturally to relieve the anxieties of the Government by an express to Lord Melville, informing him that the transfer of Buonaparte had been peaceably effected, and that he was already *en route* for his place of exile.

This was the last important service that Lord Keith was to perform for his country; and he doubtless felt proud that his public career should be wound up by so memorable an incident. The arrangements connected with the disposal of Buonaparte had exposed his judgment and prudence to an ordeal which not every officer would have come through so satisfactorily; and the Government readily acknowledged the obligations under which it lay to his management of so embarrassing and

delicate a duty. After Buonaparte had sailed, and Lord Keith's despatches had been considered, Lord Melville wrote him the following letter:—

"ADMIRALTY, 14*th August* 1815.

"MY LORD,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your lordship's several letters giving an account of your interviews with General Buonaparte, and the detailed arrangements which you had made in the execution of the instructions you had received, from the time of his arrival till his departure in the Northumberland.

I should not do justice either to my own feelings, or to the sentiments of the other members of the Prince Regent's Government, if I did not express to your lordship our entire approbation of your proceedings on this occasion, and the sense we entertain of the zeal and judgment which you have evinced during the whole course of these transactions.—I have the honour to be, &c., MELVILLE.

"ADMIRAL LORD KEITH, K.B."

The restoration of peace once more freed Lord Keith from command, and his country was not again destined to require his services. He soon afterwards gave up the command of the Channel fleet, after upwards of half a century spent in the active naval service of his country. During the whole of that time he can hardly be said to have enjoyed a holi-

day, for on the rare occasions during which he was without a ship or a command, his abilities were in some way or other almost generally utilised by the Government or the Admiralty, and the brief part of his life that was spent on shore was not less taken up with public work than when he was afloat.

CHAPTER XIX.

RETIREMENT AND DEATH.

1815–1823.

ALTHOUGH the transition from a career of such unremitting activity as Lord Keith had spent in the service of the country to the life of a private gentleman was a great change, a man of his activity of temperament and mental resource was not likely to fall into habits of indolence and discontent. He could now look forward to establishing a home, and to mixing in society, of which he was very fond, and which gave him in return a very cordial reception. In his second marriage he had been extremely fortunate in finding a wife who, in addition to her high intellectual accomplishments, possessed those domestic virtues which were most qualified to make a husband happy.

Lord Keith's great abilities and prudence had laid the foundations of a handsome fortune, and at the time of retiring from the service he was a considerable landed proprietor, both in England and in Scotland.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century he had purchased the barony of Stonehaven, then in the market, mainly out of affection for his ancestors the Earls Marischal, the ruins of whose old keep of Dunottar still guard the southern entrance of its little bay. He had also the estate of Banheath in Dumbartonshire, from which the title of his British peerage was taken. He was also master of the beautiful estate of Purbrooke Park in Hants, and in the last years of the eighteenth century he purchased an estate in Scotland, which was to become the chief seat of his family. The barony of Tullyallan (the beautiful hill) lies in one of the detached portions of Perthshire, that seem, by accident, to have been dropped down into the counties of Fife and Clackmannan. It was close to the home of his childhood, for the old tower of Elphinstone lies just beyond the Forth; and he could look out upon the grey towers of Stirling and the brown line of the Grampians, on which his eyes had so often lingered when he was a boy. To the improvement of Tullyallan, Lord Keith applied himself with characteristic energy and discernment. He built a large house, not far from the ruined tower of the Blackadders, the former lords of the barony, and surrounded it with tasteful gardens and picturesque plantations. The castle was finished in 1820; but its beauty has been largely added to by his trustees and successors.

In the improvement of his estate, and in promoting

the welfare of his neighbours, his active mind found sufficient vent during his brief years of retirement. The chief village on his estate was the little seaport of Kincardine-on-Forth, which at that time, like many of the other towns on the Firth, drove a considerable shipping trade of its own. In its commerce Lord Keith took the deepest interest. He planned the present piers, which were afterwards erected by his executors at a cost of from £6000 to £7000; and he encouraged the shipowners to embark in more distant ventures than were usually undertaken by the coast traders. In Lord Keith's time it was not uncommon for the Kincardine shipowners to send cargoes to the East and West Indies; but its commerce has long since been swept away to other ports. He had been anxious that the anchorage off Longannet, in the vicinity of Kincardine, should have been made the Forth station for vessels of the Royal Navy; and the Admiralty had given the matter serious consideration, but had finally fixed upon Queensferry as a more convenient locality. Longannet was possessed of quarries of valuable building stone, which had attained something more than local celebrity. Some of the public buildings in Edinburgh, including, it is said, the Register House, had been built from these quarries, which had also supplied the stone for the present Stadt House at the Hague. Lord Keith resolved to utilise the quarries in the construction of a great pro-

tection wall, which would reclaim a considerable tract of land from the Forth, as well as improve the navigation of the river and the harbour of Kincardine. He planned the two embankments running east and west of the port of Kincardine, and had already begun the construction of the latter a year before his death. Its length is 2020 yards, and its height 11½ feet above the level of the Forth. The west embankment took three years to build, and over £6000 were expended upon it, but the result was an addition to the Tulliallan estate of 216 acres of reclamation. The work was continued after Lord Keith's death by his representatives, who built the embankment running from Kincardine pier to Longannet, a mile and three quarters in length. Its height was 16 feet, and the extent of land reclaimed was 216 acres; but it was not until 1839 that this undertaking was completed, at a cost of £14,000. These works, which were the most extensive of the kind that had ever been planned by a Scottish proprietor, projected at a time when there was less spirit shown by landlords in making improvements, attest the energy of mind and enlightened views of their noble author; and had his life been prolonged, he would doubtless have devised other not less important means of contributing to the prosperity of his tenants and neighbours.

Lord Keith had never shown much love for politics, although he had entered Parliament as a means

of advancing his professional prospects; and he took little personal interest in the debates of the House of Lords, even after his retirement from the service had provided him with ample leisure for taking his place among the Peers. But he went much into society, where his genial manners, wit, and experience of the world made him a favoured guest. Lord Keith had few of the qualities of the typical admiral of that period. At home and abroad he had mixed with the most distinguished men of his time, and he had played the parts of soldier and diplomatist, as well as his own proper *rôle* of sailor. He had been the personal friend of many of the foremost politicians of the latter days of George III., and had held offices in the households of both the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence. When the honours and personal distinction which had followed his services were added to his high character and amiability, it is easy to understand that he was likely to make his mark wherever he went.

Lord Keith's elder daughter Margaret, upon whom his Irish peerage had been entailed, and who was now in her own right the heir of the attainted Scotch barony of Nairne, made a very conspicuous figure in the society of the Regency. Her correspondence shows her to have possessed great strength of character. She married in 1817 the Count de Flahault, Napoleon's aide-de-camp, but her father never could bring himself to view this marriage with approbation.

His sympathies had all along been very strongly enlisted in the cause of the French royal family, and his experience of the Buonapartists had been of too intimate a nature to make it possible for him to view with cordiality an alliance with one of that faction, however desirable and worthy in other respects. After the Revolution of July, Count de Flahault was restored to his rank, and represented King Louis Philippe at the Courts of Berlin and Vienna. Under the Second Empire he was appointed ambassador at the Court of St James's in 1860; and the hospitality which he and Madame de Flahault dispensed, as well as the brilliant circles of which they were the centre, are still in the recollection of the present generation. Countess Flahault died in 1867, three years before her husband, and the barony of Nairne descended to her daughter, the Dowager Marchioness of Lansdowne.

The severe and arduous strain to which Lord Keith had been subjected during long years of service had not failed to tell upon his constitution. Although his active habits and indomitable spirit refused to permit him, even in retirement, to take the complete repose which he so greatly needed, and although to all appearances he was still unimpaired in mental faculties and physical vigour, his life had really been worn out in the service of his country. He was entering upon his seventieth year when he quitted the service, and only other seven years of life

were in store for him,—years that, though short, were still crowded with many useful works and far-seeing plans, which have not yet ceased to bear fruit. The year before his death he received the last of his many honours, in the shape of the insignia of the Grand Cross of the Royal and Military Order of S.S. Maurice and Lazare, founded by Duke Amadeus VIII. of Savoy in 1434, which was conferred upon him by the King of Sardinia for his services at the siege of Genoa, and which George IV. readily accorded him permission to wear. This was in 1822; and on the 10th March of the following year Lord Keith died at Tulliallan Castle, and was buried in the old church of Overtown in his own parish, which he had selected as a mausoleum for his family.

This memoir has dealt so exclusively with the public services of Lord Keith that we may be excused for adding a few words regarding his personal character and influence upon his profession and contemporaries. No man can rise to such eminence as he attained without exciting detraction and enmity, and Lord Keith did not fail to experience hostility both in naval and political circles. He, however, stoutly lived down all prejudices against himself, and found a fitting reward in the confidence of his Government and countrymen. The guiding principle of his conduct was a strict adherence to his public duty, and if this course led

him into trouble, he quietly submitted without assuming an attitude of martyrdom. When he was blamed for the escape of Admiral Bruix's fleet, which was due to Earl St Vincent's orders, and when, again, he was exposed to obloquy in connection with the Convention of El Arish, he simply re-read his instructions, and was satisfied when he found that he had obeyed them to the letter.

Among those of his brother officers who were personally acquainted with him, Lord Keith was held in affectionate estimation; and no one who was in difficulty ever sought in vain for his kindly and judicious counsel. Even where the strict letter of his duty compelled him to severity, he could be both the admiral and the brother officer; and when he had meted out justice to the offender, his next thought was how he could best serve him. It would be easy to give interesting illustrations of this from his correspondence, did we wish to revive old stories that are now happily forgotten. Among the seamen he possessed great personal influence, as was shown in the year of mutinies, for the sailors knew quite well that he would deal with them as justly as severely. His popularity was also enhanced by the fact that common belief credited him with being lucky as a prize-taking admiral—a superstition which made men anxious to serve in his fleet. Both as a captain and as an admiral he was always solicitous for the comfort of his seamen; and some of his warm-

est differences with the Admiralty were due to his setting aside the ordinary sick dietary, and supplying his invalids and wounded with better fare than the authorities thought they required. At the same time, when there was service to be performed and stores ran low, he would not hesitate to cut down his crews to the last biscuit that would sustain existence, rather than that the enterprise in hand should suffer by being broken off.

Entering the navy from pure love of the profession, Lord Keith had made himself a complete master of navigation at a very early stage in his career. He thoroughly understood every detail of seamanship, and could himself have discharged any piece of duty that was to be performed on board. He was a severe critic in shipbuilding, and woe betide the contractor who had scamped his work, if he fell under Lord Keith's eye. In his post-captain's days, when jobbery was rampant, before Earl St Vincent had overhauled the dockyards, Captain Elphinstone never fitted out a ship without reading the Admiralty departments a homily on her defects; and in latter days, when exercising an independent command, he always showed a great interest in the reform of the dockyards within his limits—an interest which not unfrequently bred trouble between himself and the departmental officials, whom, however, he had a quiet way of putting down. His ideas, both of naval warfare and of ship equipments, were too ad-

vanced for many of his contemporaries. He was a great advocate for the employment of fire-ships, which his rivals declared to be an un-English practice, forgetting that it had the sanction of so famous a name as that of Sir Francis Drake. He was the earliest advocate of the employment of the carronade in the Royal Navy; and never ceased in pressing for the employment of that arm, in spite of the hostility which it met with from so many other officers, and of the distrust of the Navy Board.

Lord Keith was possessed of advantages in which few contemporary admirals had participated. To his knowledge of his own profession he added a greater experience of military service than had fallen to the lot of most naval commanders of his time; and the natural aptitude for leading men on shore, which had attracted so much notice at Charlestown and Toulon, and which had enabled him to co-operate so efficiently in undertakings like the reduction of the Cape of Good Hope, the siege of Genoa, and the Egyptian expedition, leaves little doubt that had he selected the army as a profession, he might have risen to high distinction as a soldier. His administrative abilities were well known and much relied on by the Admiralty; and his advice was repeatedly asked when the exigencies of the war rendered it necessary for the Government to provide large quantities of grain and stores with cheapness and secrecy; and on several important occasions extensive purchases were

made in the Mediterranean under his supervision, much to the disgust of the usual contractors.

Lord Keith's qualifications in politics and diplomacy were also frequently put to more severe tests than are usually applied to naval officers. The whole plan of the reduction of the Dutch and French colonies in the East, the occupation of the Cape, and the arrangements to be made for the security of the Indian seas, were based on his memoranda and suggestions to Earl Spencer and Mr Dundas. While in the Mediterranean, he was trusted with large discretionary powers in dealing with the Allies, and with the troublesome potentates of the African seaboard; and his relations with the punctilious and arrogant Austrians in the Genoese operations exposed both his temper and his tact to a severe strain. Lord Keith, however, could meet every man on his own ground, so long as the mutual standpoint was fair and honest; and when he found himself exposed to double-dealing and chicanery, he at once retreated behind his official shield, and put forward the written letter of his instructions. Strict adherence to this line of conduct made him a match for the subtleness of French and the obstinacy of Dutch negotiators; and the mixture of kindness and firmness which he showed to those enemies who fell into his power, had established for him a high reputation among the foreigners with whom he had been brought into contact.

Complaints have been made by naval writers,

particularly by Mr James, that Lord Keith did not always give sufficiently generous recognition to the services of those who distinguished themselves under his flag. It has been alleged that his despatches were frequently so brief and meagre, that individual services were slighted over, if not altogether overlooked. Such a charge is more easily made than refuted; but Lord Keith's despatches show that he never failed to press upon the Admiralty the promotion of deserving officers, and the navy lists of his day show a long array of men who owed their position to his discriminating patronage. He struggled as much as he possibly could against favouritism on the part of the Admiralty, by giving acting appointments to deserving officers, in order that they might have a claim for confirmation; and he carried his recognition of merit below the commissioned ranks, for his official correspondence is largely interspersed with letters urging on the Admiralty the claims of warrant-officers and seamen to the bounty of the country. With the officers immediately about him he speedily established an affectionate intimacy, and many life-long friendships were formed on board his flag-ship. He had all the geniality without the roughness of the older school of seamen; and the hearty way in which he entered into the pursuits and pleasures of his officers was rewarded on their part with their complete confidence and devotion.

Although Lord Keith never had an opportunity of distinguishing himself in a great naval victory, like those that perpetuate the names of his contemporaries, Howe, Duncan, Jervis, and Nelson, the results to the country from his half-century of service fully entitle his name to stand in the first rank of naval commanders, in an age when the sea-service was richer than it ever had been before in gallant and distinguished sailors. His career is all the more notable that it was built up by hard work, merit, and perseverance, rather than by the fortunes of a successful action. Had the French and Spanish fleets accepted his invitation to battle off Cadiz on 4th May 1799, he might have left more laurels, and reached a higher step in the peerage; but he could not have added to his reputation as a zealous servant of the Crown and defender of the Country.

INDEX.

Abercromby, Sir Ralph, appointed to command expedition to Egypt, 237—mortally wounded, 268.

Aboukir, the landing at, 257 *et seq.* —French criticisms of, 260.

Addington, Mr, private letter from Lord Keith to, 293.

Aigle, L', capture of, 55.

Alexandria, the battle of, 266—blockade of, 271 *et seq.*—the siege pressed, 297—capitulates, 301.

Alexandria, effects of the armistice of, 214.

American war, the, 23 *et seq.*

Arbuthnot, Admiral Marriot, 34—his expedition against Charlestown, 40 *et seq.*—letters from, to Elphinstone, 43, 44.

Baird, John, carpenter, his narrative of the burning of the Queen Charlotte, 189.

Balmerino, Lord, 2.

Barfleur, Elphinstone in command of, 84—Lord Keith hoists his flag on, 156.

Bastard, Colonel, letter to Mr Addington on Plymouth mutinies, 151.

Batavia, proposed expedition against, 110, 117.

Beaver, Captain, cuts out the Prima galley, 210—sent home with despatches, 215 — appointed Lord Keith's flag-captain, 249.

Bengal officers, mutiny of the, 111.

Bickerton, Sir Richard, sent against Ganteaume, 292.

Blankett, Captain, accompanies Elphinstone to the Cape, 86—left in command, 108.

Bruix, Vice-Admiral, puts out of Brest, 157—appears off Cadiz, 159 —enters the Mediterranean, 160—pursuit by Lord Keith, 163 *et seq.* —returns to Brest, 169.

Bunbury, Sir Henry, his account of interview with Buonaparte, 375 *et seq.*

Buonaparte, Major, Commandant of Artillery at Toulon, 70—his journey to Rochefort, 355—goes on board the Bellerophon, 362—interview with Lord Keith, 371—second interview, 375 *et seq.*—last interview, 399—subpœnaed by the Court of Queen's Bench, 389—transferred to the Northumberland, 407.

Cadiz, blockade by Lord Keith of, 156—British forces appear before, 241—retire from, 246.

Cairo capitulates to General Hutchinson, 294—controversy regarding it, 295.
Campbell, Lord Frederick, opposes Elphinstone for Dumbartonshire, 51, 52.
Cape expedition, the, 83.
Capitan Pasha, the, 272.
Capraja, intended attack on, 184.
Carnatic, the Nawab of, Princess of Wales's portrait presented to, 112—his friendship for Elphinstone, 117.
Carronades, Lord Keith's advocacy of, 423.
Carteaux seizes Ollioules, 69.
Catamaran expedition, the, 342 *et seq.*
Charlestown, blockade of, 29—siege and capture of, 39.
Clarence, the Duke of, serves under Elphinstone, 56.
Clarke, General Alured, arrives at the Cape, 98.
Clinton, Sir Henry, 40 *et seq.*—letters from, 41, 42.
Cochrane, the Honourable Captain, at Aboukir, 261—his complaints of Lord Keith answered, 287—at the siege of Alexandria, 300.
Collingwood on the chase of Admiral Bruix, 168, 169.
Colquhoun, Mr John, his story of Lord Keith's squadron, 173.
Concepcion or Esmeralda and the Paz corvettes captured by Captain Hillyer, 239.
"Country gentlemen" party, 57.
Craig, Major-General, commands troops in the Cape expedition, 86.
Croker, J. W., letter from, regarding Buonaparte, 358.

Dekker, Captain, senior Dutch naval officer at the Cape, 89.
Downman, Captain, of the Santa Dorotea, 208.
Duff, Lieutenant, his account of the burning of the Queen Charlotte, 186.
Dugommier lays siege to Toulon, 70.
Dumbartonshire election, the, 50 *et seq.*
Dundas, General, at Toulon, 73.
Dundas, Henry (Lord Melville), consults with Elphinstone about reducing Dutch and French colonies in the East, 86, 87, 105—letter to Elphinstone announcing his peerage, 133.
Dutch colonies in the East, plan for reducing the, 85.
Dutch colonists, troubles with the, 107, 109.
Dutch fleet captured by Elphinstone, 120 *et seq.*

East India Company, sword presented to Lord Keith by the, 136.
East, plan for reducing the French and Dutch colonies in the, 85.
Eguillette, Fort, Toulon, fortified by the British, 72—captured by the French, 75.
Egypt, the French in, 222 *et seq.*—Lord Keith's views regarding the reduction of, 237.
El Arish, the convention of, 222 *et seq.*—disallowed by Lord Keith's despatch, 227 *et seq.*
Elphinstone, Captain John, 87.
Elphinstone, Charles, tenth Lord, 2 *et seq.*
Elphinstone family, the, 1.
Elphinstone, the Honourable Charles, lost in the Prince George, 6.
Elphinstone, the Hon. William, 6, 10, 135, 143.
Elsnizt, General, his operations against Suchet, 195, 199, 212.

Emerald frigate, the, 9.
Erskine, Lieutenant-Colonel, mortally wounded, 264.
Evans of the Raleigh, Captain, 41.

Fire-ships, 341.
Flahault, Countess, 419.
Fleming, Lady Clementina, 23.
Foudroyant, Lord Keith hoists his flag on board of, 153.
Franchesci, Captain, daring exploit of, 211.

Gambier, Rear-Admiral, 32.
Ganteaume, Admiral, threatens the British in Egypt, 273 *et seq.*—his expedition sails, 290.
Genoa, blockaded, 183—attacked by Lord Keith's squadron, 197—straits of the besieged, 207—horrors of the siege, 211—capitulates, 212 *et seq.*
Good Hope, expedition against the Cape of, 85.
Gosport, the, 7, 8.
Gravina, Spanish Admiral, 65.

Hallowell, Captain, his dispute with Lord Keith, 289.
Hamilton, Lady, her influence on Nelson, 155.
Hammond, Sir Andrew, 40.
Hardinge and Pelly, Captains, cut out the Atalante, 338.
Hillyer, Captain, captures the Concepcion or Esmeralda and the Paz, 239.
Hobart, Lord, Governor of Madras, 110.
Hoche, General, his descent on Ireland, 131.
Hohenzollern advances on Genoa, 195.
Hood, Lord, his expedition to Toulon, 62.
Hotham, Commodore, 28—Sir Henry, on the look-out for Buonaparte, 358.
Howe, Lord, 25, 26.
Hutchinson, Major-General, succeeds Sir Ralph Abercromby, 269—marches up the Nile, 273 *et seq.*—receives capitulation of Cairo, 297.

India, Elphinstone consulted by Dundas regarding affairs of, 104.

Jervis, Captain (Lord St Vincent), 7, 8—Lord Keith appointed second in command to, 153—makes over command to Lord Keith, 163.
Juno frigate, the, 9.

Keith, Lord, birth, 1—enters the Gosport as midshipman, 7—serves under East India Company, 9—reinstated in Royal Navy, 12—in command of the Scorpion, 14 *et seq.*—gazetted post-captain, 23—serves in American war, 25 *et seq.*—at the capture of Charlestown, 39 *et seq.*—enters Parliament, 52—captures the Rotterdam, 53—in the Toulon expedition, 59 *et seq.*—made a Knight of the Bath and Rear-Admiral of the Blue, 84—commands expedition to the Cape, 86 *et seq.*—captures the Dutch fleet, 120 *et seq.*—raised to the peerage, 134—in the Nore mutiny, 139 *et seq.*—quells mutiny at Plymouth, 148 *et seq.*—offers battle to French and Spanish fleets, 159—pursues Admiral Bruix, 161 *et seq.*—besieges Genoa, 193 *et seq.*—disallows convention of El Arish, 227—commands with Sir Ralph Abercromby expedition to Egypt, 247 *et seq.*—returns from the Mediterranean, 306 *et seq.*—appointed to defend North Sea coast, 319—the surren-

der of Buonaparte, 362 *et seq.*—death, 420.
Kincardine reclamation-works on the Forth undertaken by Lord Keith, 417.
Kléber left in command in Egypt, 222—his proclamation, 232—assassinated, 234.

La Fayette, escape of, 56.
La Malgue, Fort, Toulon, 63 *et seq.*
Langara, Don Juan de, 63—quarrel with Lord Hood, 73.
Lapoype, General, his force kept in check by Elphinstone, 68, 69—attacks Mont Faron, 76.
Liguria, the situation in, in 1800, 183.
Lincoln, General, defends Charlestown, 45 *et seq.*
Lively frigate, the, 9.
London, defenceless state of, during the Nore mutiny, 141.
Louis, Captain, of the Minotaur, 198—mentioned in Lord Keith's despatch, 215.
Lucas, Admiral Engelbertus, capitulates to Elphinstone in Saldanha Bay, 124 *et seq.* — accompanies Elphinstone to England, 130—walks in procession at State thanksgiving, 152.

Mackenrot, A., endeavours to serve a writ on Lord Keith, 389.
Madras, Elphinstone at, 109 *et seq.*
Maitland, Captain, of the Bellerophon, 262 *et seq.*
Malta, French attempt to reinforce, frustrated, 181—Lord Keith visits, 178.
Mareotis, Lake, waters of the Mediterranean let into, 272.
Marischal, the last Earl, 7 *et seq.*—correspondence with his nephews, 10 *et seq.*, 19—receives Sir R. M. Keith, *ib.*—death, 21.
Marmorice Bay, the Egyptian expedition in, 250 *et seq.*
Massena, defends Genoa, 194 *et seq.*—massacres the Genoese slaves, 210—forced to capitulate, 212—interview with Lord Keith, 214.
Mediterranean, Lord Keith takes command in the, 175.
Melas, General, 179.
Melas, his mistakes in Piedmont, 213—his plan of conjunct operations, 193—visits Lord Keith, 198—success of his plans, 199, 200—marches against Suchet, 204.
Melville, Lord, advocates an expedition to Egypt, 237, 304 — correspondence with Lord Keith regarding Buonaparte, 357 *et seq.*
Menou reinforces Alexandria, 265—endeavours to get rid of non-combatants, 296.
Mercer, Miss, of Aldie, married to Captain Elphinstone, 58.
Montholon, Count, his exaggerated account of interview between Buonaparte and Lord Keith, 401, 402.
Moore, General, sent to Grand Vizier's camp, 252.
Morla, De, Governor of Cadiz, his letter to Sir Ralph Abercromby and Lord Keith, 242.
Mulgrave, Lord, at Toulon, 68, 70.
Muizenberg, capture of the Dutch position at, 93 *et seq.*—Dutch attempts at recapture, 96.
Murray Keith, Sir Robert, visits the Earl Marischal, 19.

Nairne, barony of, 58, 135.
Naples, the Queen of, at Leghorn, 218 *et seq.*
Neapolitan officials, Elphinstone's altercation with the, 16.
Nelson, Lord, his relations with Lord St Vincent, 155—disobeys Lord Keith's orders, 171—retires

from the Mediterranean command, 218.
Nore, the mutiny at the, 139 *et seq.*

O'Hara, General, at Toulon, 73 — made prisoner, 75.
Ollioules, Elphinstone defeats the French at, 65.
Ott, Baron d', 195.

Parker, Richard, heads the mutiny at the Nore, 139—delivered up, 147.
Parker, Sir Peter, unsuccessfully attacks Charlestown, 39.
Patton, Captain, his plans for a fire-ship, 341.
Perrée, Rear-Admiral, his squadron captured by Lord Keith, 165.
Perseus frigate, Captain Elphinstone in command of the, 24.
Plymouth, Lord Keith suppresses the mutinies at, 148 *et seq.*
Popham, Sir Home, attacks the Boulogne flotilla with catamarans, 346 — off the coast of Spain, 352.
Poussielgue, Deputy, his reception by Lord Keith, 233.
Prevost, General, letter from, 31.
Prima galley, cutting out of the, 210.

Queen Charlotte, mutiny on board the, 136—the burning of the, 185 *et seq.*—origin of the fire, 191.
"Queenie," Dr Johnson's, 348.

Rainier, Commodore, 105 — left in command in the Indian seas, 131.
Ramsay, Allan, his lines on the Countess of Wigton, 3.
Régenérée, the, slips through the British fleet, 255.
Repulse, suppression of the mutiny on board of the, 145.
Robust, Captain Elphinstone appointed to the, 59.
Romney frigate, Captain Elphinstone commander of the, 23.
Rotterdam, capture of the, 53.

Saldanha Bay, Elphinstone captures the Dutch fleet in, 120 *et seq.*
Sardinia, King of, confers Order of St Maurice and Lazare on Lord Keith, 420.
Saturn, mutiny on board of, suppressed by Lord Keith, 148.
Savona capitulates, 208.
Scorpion, Elphinstone commander of the, 14 *et seq.*
Shore, Sir John, and the Bengal officers, 111.
Sluysken, Commissary, Dutch Governor at the Cape, 88, 90, 91—capitulates, 100.
Smith, Sir Sidney, at Toulon, 77—commands a squadron in the Levant, 154, 175—his anomalous position in the Levant, 224—controversies with Lord Nelson, 225—negotiates convention of El Arish, 228 — further negotiations with Kléber at Aboukir, 261—guarding the Dutch ports against the threatened invasion, 322.
Southwark Bridge, Lord Keith lays the foundation-stone of, 353.
Spencer, Earl, and Sir Sidney Smith, 224.
Spencer, Earl, congratulates Elphinstone on capture of the Cape, 103.
St Alban's Tavern meetings, 57.
St Julien, Admiral, 62—Count, Lord Keith's controversy with, 208.
St Lucia, capture of, 33.
St Sebastian, siege of, 352.
State thanksgiving for the naval victories, 152.
Stewart, Captain John, his gallant

conduct at the burning of the Queen Charlotte, 185 *et seq.*—sent to survey the defences of Ostend, 340.

Thanksgiving, State, for the naval victories, 152.
Therisè, La, captured by Captain Elphinstone, 38.
Thrale, Miss, married to Lord Keith, 348.
Tod, Captain, lost in the burning of the Queen Charlotte, 188.
Tonyn, Governor of Florida, 30.
Toulon, the British descent upon, 59—evacuation of, 77.
Trident, Keith Elphinstone appointed second lieutenant of, 13.
Trogoff, Count de, 62.
Troubridge, Captain, blockades Malta, 175.
Tulliallan Castle built by Lord Keith, 415.

Vincejo brig-sloop lost, 339.

Warwick, Captain Elphinstone appointed to the, 49.
Wigton, Mary, Countess of, 3—Allan Ramsay's lines on, *ib.*
Williams, Lieutenant, engages 16 sail of the French, 338.

THE END.

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